SECRET HARBOUR

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

To Julia -

From

Cy.

Xmas 1929 -

SECRET HARBOUR

SECRET HARBOUR

BY

STEWART EDWARD WHITE

AUTHOR OF
THE BLAZED TRAIL,
THE RIVERMAN,
GOLD, ETC.

GROSSET & DUNLAP
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1926, BY DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY. COPYRIGHT, 1925, BY THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES AT THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

SECRET HARBOUR

SECRET HARBOUR

CHAPTER I

FOR the first time since his marriage Marshall found himself again in Vancouver and again strolling idly down the backbone of the peninsula on which that fortunate city is situated. As was the case two years before, the day was crisp with early spring. Coal Harbour gleamed blue on one side, and on the other the wide waters of English Bay twinkled under a singing breeze. Lion Peak rose high and snow clad across the way, and the masts of tall ships. Even the same birds, apparently, made the same cheerful remarks to him from the shrubbery of the tiny park through which his steps led him.

But, he reflected, the situation had most considerably altered since that former occasion. Then he had been sick to the death of a profound indifference; unable either to live or to die with any satisfaction to himself; at loose ends with the universe; with no future, with no past that he cared to remember, and the present gray. Now he was happily married to a woman whose possibilities, he felt, would suffice for the explorations of several lifetimes; each of his days rose with a song of invitation; and each seemed to reveal to him new energies of which he would never have

believed himself capable. The beginning of the change, of the cure of his spirit, had taken place in this city; indeed, as he looked about him, he told himself it must have been on this very street. Yes; yonder was the square brick house where he had first met that queer, humorous, wise human entity who had called himself the Healer of Souls, and who had led him forth into the series of adventures that had culminated in a complete cure and an equally complete wife. After which the magician had disappeared for foreign parts, leaving his sister and her husband to the manifold devices possible to youth and wealth.

Marshall crossed the street. He knew that the square brick house had been only a temporary abode; in fact, rented for the week; but his sentimental interest in it was strong. As he drew nearer he could mark no alteration. It was one of those houses ageless with commonplace. Its picket fence, its bit of lawn, its hydrangeas and geraniums, its brick squareness, its cupola atop, its wooden veranda, its prim lace curtains had not changed, would never change until the whole fabric should be overwhelmed by a commercial expansion that, in this quiet street, could not take place for many years. Even the corner where the Healer of Souls had displayed his fantastic business plate was now furnished with a similar brass sign; probably, Marshall supposed, of dressmaking or millinery, or some kindred respectable calling. Nothing was changed. It might have been two years agone.

Then, abruptly, he stopped short, his eyes starting from his head. He shut the said eyes tight: then opened them again to see if they insisted on the same report. They

did. There was no doubt of it. The sign was of brass; it had been recently and sedulously polished; its lettering was unmistakable.

X. ANAXAGORAS

HEALER OF SOULS

was the inscription it carried.

Marshall stood, electrified. It was unbelievable! He pushed open the gate, strode to the door, jerked at the old-fashioned bell-pull. Apparently the same maid admitted him to the same interior, ushered him into the same banal, commonplace "parlour." She took his card and disappeared. It seemed to him that her manner, even, was that of two years ago. She seemed to be suppressing an amusement for the sake of that rigid propriety appropriate to well-trained maids. The same echo of a closing door. The same breathless silence should have been broken by the ticking of the ormolu clock, which, however, continued fatuously to believe that it was twenty-one minutes past ten. These things could not be! They were of the past. Their elements had been long scattered. The house, after its week's tenancy, should have passed into other hands which must somewhere have left their impress. The maid should have quitted domestic service to sell things in some shop in Granville Street. Somebody should have wound or repaired the ormolu clock or chucked it disgustedly into an ash bin. A vanished episode that should live only in memory seemed to have been reconstructed from the invisible where memories dwell. An absurd wave of panic swept through the young man. He was seized with a sud-

den impulse to escape, to rush forth to assure himself that the *Spindrift* actually lay at anchor in Coal Harbour; that Betsy existed and was aboard her; that the last two years were realities, and that he was not in very truth and in actual body back in that other May morning.

The maid reappeared. Marshall arose and followed her to the same small consulting room at the back with the blue walls and the blue glass in the windows and the flat-topped desk and the two chairs. He seated himself in one of the latter and stared at the ornamental door opposite. After an interval of waiting he felt impelled to address the emptiness; and, strangely enough, after he had done so, he realized that he had used about the same words as before.

"I'm sufficiently impressed," he said. "Come in." Then he added, on his own account, "Don't be absurd, Sid. Explain yourself."

But he obtained no response. With a shrug he settled back to wait. The eerie feeling was passing. Another of his brother-in-law's eccentricities! Useless to try to force the issue.

At the end of five minutes the ornamental door opened to admit a young man clad in the white of a hospital surgeon. He entered briskly and, ignoring Marshall's eager start of welcome, seated himself on the opposite side of the desk.

"Sit down, Mr. Marshall," he commanded, authoritatively. "I am pleased to see you here again."

"What in the world are you doing here?" cried Marshall. "I thought you were in India!"

"I recently returned."

"But what in the world is all this flummery? And how are you, anyway? And why didn't you let us know? Betsy is here. We have the *Spindrift* down in the harbour. She'll be crazy to see you!"

But the Healer of Souls did not abate his extreme formality.

"I am, of course, aware of those facts," said he. "But let us first of all attend to the matter of this consultation." He drew a pad of paper toward him and poised his pencil.

"Good Lord, Sid, drop it!" cried Marshall, vexed. "I'm not consulting you. There's nothing the matter with me."

X. Anaxagoras listened impersonally and made a note on his pad.

"Ah!" he remarked, cryptically. "And then?"

"And then, what?" demanded Marshall. "Come, be human."

"You have stated that you are unaware of the fact that you require treatment," stated the Healer of Souls. "Then what, in your mind, is the reason for consulting me?"

Marshall surveyed him disgustedly.

"Well," he remarked at last, with elaborate sarcasm, "as you happen to be my brother-in-law, not to speak of being what I consider a pretty good friend; and as I haven't seen you for two years; and as I find you here when you're supposed to be consorting with Mahatmas somewhere in the Himalayas, I naturally came in to clasp your manly hand and invite you to have a drink. Then,

too, you have a sister with whom, as far as I know, you are still on terms, and whom, also, you have not seen for two years. Anything significant and pathological in that?—You old idiot!" he added.

Again Anaxagoras made notes.

"I must ask you some questions," he announced, briskly, when he had finished. "Please reply as accurately as possible."

Marshall looked at him with affectionate amusement; then shrugged his shoulders.

"Shoot," said he, resignedly. Useless to combat Sid in one of his freakish moods. Might as well play up.

"No trace of the old trouble?"

"Eh?"

"The soul-numbness; the complete indifference. Feel a normal interest in life? Look forward to the future? Fully alive?"

Marshall laughed.

"Oh, that! No trouble in that respect! As you pointed out once, Betsy is capable of supplying that to a dead man; and I'm far from dead. Why, Sid——"

X. Anaxagoras cut him short.

"The treatment in that respect seems to be permanently successful. Happy?"

"As a clam!"

"Well, what are you going to do with it?"

"What?" asked Marshall, blankly.

"Your happiness; your aliveness."

"I don't believe I get you."

"What are your plans for a future?"

"We're cruising up the coast toward Alaska."

"And then, after that?"

"No plans."

"Does that satisfy you as a prospect?"

"There's always plenty to do," rejoined Marshall, slowly.

"And after that?"

"I—I hadn't thought."

"You have wealth; you have energy; you have happiness. Are you going to allow them to devour each other?"

Marshall's air of amusement had faded; but the struggle against taking a serious attitude toward an absurdity resulted in a suppressed irritation. Nevertheless, a door that had been closed seemed to have opened, disclosing new things.

"Shall you continue to be happy in that?"

X. Anaxagoras allowed a pause.

"And then what?" he repeated.

The young man did not reply.

"Business?"

"It does not interest me. I have sufficient money. There are enough people making things."

"Art? Literature? Music?"

"I have no taste or knowledge."

"Philanthropy? Politics?"

Marshall made a gesture of distaste.

"The pursuit of knowledge?"

"I'm a regular bonehead and you know it!" cried the young man, resentfully.

X. Anaxagoras leaned back in his chair.

"The case, as you see, is sufficiently serious," he enunciated, crisply. "Unused tools tarnish, rust, and decay. You have wealth, energy, and happiness. They are worth preserving. Your soul is not in disorder as it was before, but it soon will be. Preventive therapeutics are wiser than cures. Your position is dangerous. You have done well to seek this consultation at just this time."

"But I tell you I did not seek it!" rejoined Marshall, with a return of his exasperation. "It was pure chance!"

"In the web of life, if one looks deeply enough, there is no pure chance. A hunger of the spirit orients it unerringly toward its need, can we but recognize that fact." He arose. "Wait one minute," he abruptly finished, and disappeared through the ornamental door.

He was gone, not one minute, but five. At the end of that period he reappeared. He was now tweed-clad and carried a suitcase. His professional manner had vanished with his white hospital clothes.

"*Hiyu tillicum!*" he cried, clasping his visitor's hand. "That's Chinook 'for heap big friend.' How are you, anyway? And how have you been? And is Betsy flourishing? Have you room for me aboard the *Spindrift?*"

He led the way through the hall. Marshall, bewildered by this sudden change, followed him. At the front door he turned the key and pocketed it.

"Just a moment." He halted Marshall.

From his coat pocket he produced a screwdriver with which he proceeded carefully to detach the brass sign from the corner of the house. He tucked it under his arm and picked up the suitcase.

"All ready!" he cried, cheerfully.

"But—but——" stammered Marshall, waving his hand feebly at the house.

"Oh, that's all right. I just rented it for three days. The maid was only in for the day. All finished."

"But——" repeated Marshall, inanely.

"I knew you'd be along," said X. Anaxagoras.

CHAPTER II

THEY strolled together down toward Granville Street in search of a taxi, X. Anaxagoras chatting cheerfully upon diverse but utterly irrelevant topics, Marshall nearly silent when he found he could pin his volatile companion down to nothing profitable in the way of personal information. The Healer of Souls seemed to discover of supreme interest and importance such subjects as liquor control; why in thunder there should be a bounty on the killing of eagles; how ling cod can swallow rock cod whole, spines and all; whether a senator or a representative is the lowest form of wit. He appeared to deem there could be no merit in discoursing on whence he had come and why; and what he was going to do about it; or in the exchange of any other personal gossip that should absorb those two years separated.

"Betsy will be surprised to see you," Marshall made a last attempt as they stepped into the taxi.

"Oh, not so very," X. Anaxagoras replied, easily.

They drove around the beautiful curve of Coal Harbour and through the natural lawns and giant cedars of Stanley Park until they had reached the quarters of the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Here they stood for a moment on the elevated platform before descending the incline to the floats. At the latter lay a long file of power cruisers

of all sizes. Beyond, each at its mooring, rode dozens of said yachts—schooners, yawls, sloops—all trim and white and shipshape. They swung in double rows as though drilled, answering the vagrant suggestions of the breeze that hummed over the trees from the gulf. On the floats and on the decks of some of the craft were young men in the most smeared of white dungarees happily doing the small and puttery things the amateur sailorman loves.

Out beyond the orderly rows of resident yachts lay a schooner longer than the rest. She, too, gleamed a dazzling white. Her spars twinkled in the sun as the wavelets twinkled below her; brasswork heliographed; the standing and running rigging stood taut as bowstrings; even at this distance it was evident that the canvas sail covers had been drawn and laced smooth and tight with a loving care, and that such gadgets as the handropes on the gangway overside and the covered rails of the after deck had been freshly whitened. Altogether a craft to delight the yachtsman's eye.

X. Anaxagoras lingered over her details. Astern floated the ensign; the truck on the foremast flew a burgee, on the mainmast a device which was evidently the owner's private signal. At the main starboard spreader had been hoisted a small square blue flag, indicating the owner's absence. All was as correct as a New Yorker going to church.

"The *Spindrift*," said Marshall, who had been watching his companion with pride. "Seagoing. A hundred horse power auxiliary."

"She's a pretty craft," agreed the Healer of Souls.

Marshall produced a whistle from his pocket which he blew shrilly thrice. Three white figures almost instantly appeared, dropped into a small boat tethered at the end of the mooring boom. One took its place at the stern. The other two seized long oars which they simultaneously raised to a perpendicular; and then, as one man, dropped into the water.

"True nautical precision," commented X. Anaxagoras.

Marshall nodded in satisfaction, and the slight trace of anxiety with which he had watched these proceedings faded from his eyes.

"Two of my men were trained in the navy," said he. "These fellows know the proper thing when they see it." He nodded toward the dungaree-clad Royal members.

They descended the incline to the float, against which the boat made a smart landing. X. Anaxagoras searched in his pockets and finally produced a bundle of claim checks. From these he selected one.

"I wonder if your quartermaster, or bos'n, or chief steward, or chief hereditary manipulator of the royal washtub, or whatever you call him there in the stern sheets could see to getting this steamer trunk down for me. It's all I want. The rest of my plunder can stay in storage."

The faces of the three men remained wooden.

"Here, Benton; see to it," commanded Marshall, crisply.

He took the man's place in the stern sheets at the tiller lines. X. Anaxagoras seated himself alongside. The boat flew back across the frosted silver of the bay toward the *Spindrift*.

At the yacht two more white-clad figures first caught the boat's bow with a boathook, then steadied her while the passengers disembarked, then stood at attention while the latter ascended the short companion. At the instant Marshall's feet touched the deck the little blue absence flag fluttered down from the starboard spreader.

"Congratulations," murmured X. Anaxagoras. "Never seen it done better, even on the stage."

He glanced up and down the deck. It was a beautiful cream colour from scrubbing and holystoning. The coils of the standing rigging were laid down Bristol fashion.

"Even to the single modest pearl in the cravat," murmured X. Anaxagoras, cryptically.

Marshall had advanced eagerly to the companionway down which he was calling.

"Betsy! Betsy! Come on deck! We have a visitor!"

He stood aside, dramatically, to give full scope to the expected surprise. A young woman appeared. She was a slender, vivid-looking, and daintily built creature dressed all in white, with a mop of bobbed hair glowing with bronze glints, wide-apart humorous black eyes, and a whimsical mouth. She glanced toward X. Anaxagoras.

"Why, hullo, Sid," said she, calmly. "Where did you pop from? Are you visiting or just calling?"

She threw her arms around him with a quick pressure that belied the casual tone of her greeting and kissed him.

"I thought I'd visit awhile, if you'll invite me."

She appeared to consider for a minute.

"*Can* I invite you? You see I have to stop and think about these things so as not to make any horrible mistakes.

It's terrible to make mistakes aboard a yacht, much more terrible than on shore. But now I remember: he's the supreme boss only when we are under way. When we're at anchor I can be boss. So I can invite you. I do."

"Don't be absurd!" ejaculated Marshall.

"It isn't absurd," she protested. "You've no idea" —she turned again to her brother. "You *can* have no idea. The poor little *Kittiwake* could give you no idea. 'Downstairs' or 'up on the roof,' instead of 'out back,' meaning astern. Such things are nothing, a mere nothing, to the mistakes possible in this maritime monarchy. It's a real yacht, Sid. It has been very difficult for me, but I am progressing. There's a certain unfittableness of my mind when it comes to the sort of a maritime monarchy that obtains aboard a real yacht. I'm always trying to wear tan shoes in a ballroom."

"Don't be silly," Marshall varied his admonition.

"Oh, I'm trying not to be; indeed I am!" she protested, humbly. "Even now I'm uncertain. Isn't there some sort of flag we should hoist now we have a visitor? or do we shoot the little brass cannon? There must be something: there always is something."

Marshall laughed in spite of himself.

"In case of a visitor you splice the main brace," he reminded her.

"Well, I know what *that* is!" she said, gratefully, and withdrew her head down the companionway in which she had been standing.

The men followed her into the cabin. It was, however, more like a room than a cabin. At one end was a practi-

cable fireplace in which apparently glowed a genuine fire.

"It's warm and it's cheerful"—she followed X. Anaxagoras's eye—"but it's a fake. It burns electricity."

Fresh and dainty cretonne curtains shaped the ports into windows. Easy chairs fronted the fire. Books stood on racked shelves. Bright sofa cushions strewed the transoms. In whatever direction one looked one was impressed anew with the feeling of a small but cheerful room in some bungalow by the sea.

"Aren't we comfy!" she cried.

"It isn't exactly a yacht's cabin, of course——" began Marshall, almost as though in apology.

"Yachts' cabins," broke in Betsy, swiftly, "have a choice of two sorts of curtains—if any. One is a ribbed, heavy, dingy stuff; and the other is a ribbeder, heavier, dingier stuff. The other furnishings are substantial and solid affairs designed by the original male yachtsman. He was a man of practical mind, devoid of imagination, and devoid of æsthetic values. He was, I will admit, ingenious. He had to be. You know," she confided to her brother, "this isn't like the *Kittiwake*."

"So I observe," agreed X. Anaxagoras, drily, seating himself in one of the comfortable chairs.

"No; the *Kittiwake* bobs around sometimes; but this one, when she's sailing, lives on a slant. Sometimes on one side; sometimes on the other. It's like living on the slope of a roof. So everything is fixed so it won't slide off. It's *very* ingenious; but it's not always pretty."

"If she had her own way she'd probably have window boxes outside the portholes," grumbled Marshall.

"It would be pretty," agreed Betsy, thoughtfully. "But don't be alarmed, darling. You can have the outside all your own way. In fact, you have the *right*, you know, to have everything your own way. When we're on the high seas, anyhow. You've no idea!" She turned again to her brother. "There's a book up there that tells about it. He is a Master, you see; and when he's three miles offshore he can bury people, and hang people, and put them in irons, and marry people, and no one dares say him nay. I don't know whether he can divorce people: I'll look it up."

"You've developed into a regular chatterbox," was X. Anaxagoras's fraternal remark.

"Effervescence due to repression. When you're at sea, you've got to be nautical and single-minded and efficient. You don't talk; you bark. It's all 'squads right' and 'squads left' and 'by the right, fours, march'! No, that's not it: it's the other thing. 'Belay there!' and 'ready about,' and 'haul in the jib sheet.' If it wasn't for Rogg I'd believe they were all wound up at night with keys, like the ship's clock. Yachting, as it should be done, is *serious*, let me tell you."

"Who's Rogg?" asked Anaxagoras.

"You'll see him: he's our one weak spot, the blot on our perfect escutcheon. He's untamable nautically. But I've something in common with Rogg. He's a great comfort to me in my lonely and exalted state. He and I have the same perverted sense of humour."

"He's the stupidest man aboard," stated Marshall, half disgustedly. "I keep him because he's so good-natured."

"He often wears tan shoes in a ballroom," she told her brother. "It *is* mortifying—if you happen to mind."

"Oh, you'll be a yachtswoman in time," comforted the Healer of Souls. "I must say, you have a good opportunity here. I was never on a better-found craft. She is beautiful," he told Marshall, who flushed with gratification. "It takes a man to appreciate such things." His mouth quirked humorously. "There is one thing, however, if you'll pardon my mentioning it, that seems badly frayed and at loose ends. Perhaps you have not noticed it, but I have. On a stranger's yacht, I should not have mentioned it; but here in the family—you *don't* mind, do you, old chap?"

"Of course not, I'm only too grateful. What is it?" cried Marshall, casting his eye about him uneasily.

"That main brace: it really ought to be spliced."

CHAPTER III

MARSHALL dispensed the common hospitality that had to do with the main brace, then excused himself in order to see to the reception and stowage of certain stores which were reported to him as having arrived.

"I'm my own skipper," he said, "—wouldn't have much fun if I weren't. Benton's my mate, but he's uptown. Make yourself at home."

He departed, smiling indulgently to himself over the solved mystery of X. Anaxagoras's appearance. The rented house and the temporary mounting of the brass plate and the little drama of the consultation were so exactly what one might expect of his erratic brother-in-law. But when thought over, the affair required no great perspicacity. Given his knowledge that the *Spindrift* had dropped anchor in Vancouver, what more certain than that Marshall would, for the sake of old sentiment, be led to wander back up the street where he had first drifted into the current of events that had brought him to a charming wife? And if he did enter that street, he could not have failed to see the brass sign. Of course, the Healer of Souls might quite well simply have announced himself aboard, sure of a hearty welcome; but that simple procedure would have deprived him of his little comedy. The only mystery in the whole procedure—how did he

know the *Spindrift* was due in Vancouver at all?—seemed to Marshall adequately cleared up by the casualness of the greeting when he and his beloved sister had met, presumably after an almost complete silence of a year. Evidently the silence had not been so complete as Betsy had led him to believe. She, in connivance with her brother, had been arranging for him this pretty and typical little surprise.

His complacency in this simple and obvious explanation would have been dissipated, however, could he have assisted unseen at the conversation which followed his departure.

"Now, tell me," Betsy broke out at once, "what are you doing here, and how do you happen to be here? I thought you were *ex communicado* in northern India."

"I am here to meet you, of course. I came to meet you because I am needed."

She took up the first point.

"But how in the world did you know we would be here? Lower California and big-game fishing were intended. We made up our minds for the North positively at the last minute."

"Perhaps," said X. Anaxagoras.

She stared at him.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, anything you please. You see I've been consorting with Mahatmas, as you call it; and perhaps I have my little methods." He smiled at her mischievously. "Or then again," he added, after a moment, "it is barely possible that a weary voyager from the Orient, landing

prosaically in San Francisco, learned on his arrival of the clearance of the yacht *Spindrift* for Canadian waters and at once took a swift train in pursuit. Who knows?"

She still stared at him with knit brows.

"Why didn't you come to us at once?" she demanded, after a moment. "Why all the old silly play-acting?"

"That was part of it," he replied, enigmatically.

"Part of what? Your usual impishness?"

"That I am needed."

"Do you know, Sid," she said, abruptly, after another pause, "there are moments—just moments—when you almost frighten me. At times you are so obviously the small boy playing with his toys, and dressing up in mysteries to delight yourself and annoy or impress silly people. And yet——"

"And yet you do not quite know, do you, little sister? In other words, I've got you going, too!" He laughed delightedly.

She did not respond to his amusement, but remained staring at him with puzzled eyes.

"What did you mean by that?" she asked, suddenly.

"By what?"

"That you were needed. Of course, we always need you, Sid darling; but I gather from your tone that you meant something more definite."

"Oh, quite. I find I am badly needed. I have already had a professional consultation with your husband and have satisfactorily diagnosed his case."

"My husband! Jerry?" she cried, amazedly. "What is wrong with him?"

"This." X. Anaxagoras waved his hand about him. "What this stands for."

"The yacht? I don't believe I understand you."

X. Anaxagoras looked at her keenly.

"Are you, too, affected? Do you, too, need my professional care? But no: you are merely a little dulled. Don't you see that this yacht is the epitome, the symbol of the 'proper thing'?"

"Why, of course she is. Yachts should be."

"Not Jerry's yacht. To have your yacht entirely the proper thing is a very desirable game to play, and may be played very seriously by the good player. But in this case it is a dangerous symbol of an inner state."

"Elucidate, wise one," she begged, dryly. "Do you mean we are going to get stupid and important-minded?"

"Jerry," the Healer of Souls obliged, stretching his legs out leisurely, "is a remarkably fine chap. He has all the natural aptitudes of heart and disposition to endear him to his fellows. He has good looks. He has energy. He has wealth in abundance. He has few or none of the deterrences. He even has good intentions. Altogether, he is a valuable and lovable character. I love him."

"So do I," said Betsy, a trifle dangerously.

"He has one danger point. He has been so well brought up that the herd instinct is unduly sensitive. I venture to say he would recoil with horror from the idea of wearing a tam-o'-shanter and a velveteen jacket."

"He would," agreed Betsy, emphatically, "and I would recoil with horror from having him do so."

"Oh, quite! I do not recommend it. Nevertheless, he recoils not from a good-natured desire to spare the feelings of his fellow man; nor from a modest reluctance to thrust his personality forward; but simply because of the fact that it isn't done, you know. Its unconventionality is an all-sufficient reason. Jerry is in danger of adopting permanently a conventional attitude of mind.

"The main brace," observed X. Anaxagoras, at this point, "seems to me dangerously frayed." He poured himself out a very small drink and reseated himself.

"At first blush," he resumed his dissertation, "the peril may not be evident to you. But absolute reliance on convention spoils initiative. The thoroughly conventional-minded man would have no initiative at all. He would always do the proper thing; and the proper thing is merely what has been already decided. It is a filming over, a crusting over of consciousness. Life is the awakening of consciousness."

He turned upon her and levelled an accusatory forefinger.

"You are in love with him," said he, "but, if I know my sister, you cannot be blindly in love. You are capable of being clear-eyed when once your eyes are opened for you. Be honest. Are you satisfied? Here is a young man with all the best ingredients of life ready to his hand. Yet he is doing nothing with them. Are you going to cruise about on the *Spindrift* for ever?"

"What do you want him to do? What should he do?" inquired Betsy, defensively.

"Something of his own."

"What?"

"I don't know; something of his own, I tell you. And he can't do anything of his own while he is completely occupied and busily engaged in the details of doing the proper thing by that station of life to which he has been called—whether it is aboard this yacht, or in social life, or even in some form of active life. Are you being honest, Sis? Do you see it?"

She hesitated, looked to right and left, then burst out: "You *are* right, Sid—as usual in these matters. I suppose I've simply refused to face it; but deep down I must have been wondering about it. He is such a dear. It seems almost disloyal to admit it, but——"

"You don't want a tailor's dummy for a husband!" cried X. Anaxagoras, triumphantly.

"He'd never be that!" cried Betsy, at once in arms.

"Figuratively, my dear. Deny it if you can. Not naturally, I agree; but by force of training, by pressure of all the habits of early life which now are in danger of returning upon him and filming over his consciousness and hardening and forming an impermeable crust over his soul."

"Yes," agreed Betsy, thoughtfully, "he ought to do something. We *have* talked that over. But what?"

"Lord, I don't know! We haven't to decide that! That'll come along naturally enough once the crust is broken up to admit of its entrance. That isn't our job: that's his. What we've got to do is to break the surface."

"How?"

"Expose him to life."

"Do, for once, be practical and definite. What pre-

cisely do you intend to do? What do you want me to do?"

"That's the spirit!" cried the Healer of Souls, heartily. "We'll pull him out, never fear!"

"You talk as though he had the smallpox."

"Worse; much worse. But as long as we are agreed and work together, everything will come out all right."

She surveyed him thoughtfully.

"I never can quite make you out, Sid. You always talk such moonshine; and yet somehow you always make me believe in it. Yet when I stop to think of it clearly, I can't put my finger on it."

"Don't think of it clearly. Just go ahead. It's always worked out pretty well, hasn't it?"

"Yes; it has always worked out. And why it has, I couldn't tell you."

"Then it is agreed. Good!"

"I don't even know what is agreed!" she cried, throwing out her hands in mock despair. "What are we going to *do?* Do you want me to talk to him?"

"Heaven forbid! We'll just go cruising and look for adventure. Life is adventure, you know."

She laughed skeptically.

"Adventure! Where? We've been cruising all over the world now for more than a year, and not the littlest thing has happened except a good time—oh, a very good time. I'm afraid, if you depend on that, we shall wait a long while."

"It's all in the expectation. Be ready for adventure and it comes."

She shook her head doubtfully.

"Remember, I've been consorting with the Mahatmas," he reminded her, with a mocking inflection.

"Tell me honestly," she begged, with a sudden seriousness. "You said you knew you were needed——"

He surveyed her with dancing eyes.

"Across the world the call might have come to me," said he. "For each deep need of the soul somewhere in Cosmos a complement exists, could we but touch it, could we but summon it. Or," he added, briskly, "it might be that I knew both you and Jerry even better than you know yourselves; and that I reflected to myself, 'Lo! two years have passed. Certain actions and reactions must by now have taken place, and such and such a condition must by now have ripened. I think it's about time I went to see about it.'"

"I never *have* been sure." She gave up the point in despair. "Sometimes things happen that fully persuade me you have powers I cannot understand; and sometimes——"

"Sometimes I'm a pretty good opportunist. Never mind me: think of results."

"The results have always been good," she acknowledged.

"Well, there we are! Now," pursued X. Anaxagoras, settling back even more comfortably, "though our exact means are necessarily obscure, the immediate objects are sufficiently plain. There are, as I see it, four prerequisite things to accomplish. First: destroy the symbol."

"The yacht!" she cried, aghast.

"You are quick witted," he approved.

"Destroy the yacht!"

"Oh, no: destroy the symbolism of the yacht. Make her not at all the proper thing in yachts. Muss her all up. Take the wooden backbones out of the crew. All that sort of thing. That's the first."

"How do you intend to do that?"

"I don't intend to do it. Circumstances must do it. We will simply and trustfully go forth to meet the circumstances. Somewhere they exist. I know it. They *must* exist, because we need them. The second thing to accomplish is to make Jerry like it."

"I don't believe——"

"You've *got* to believe," said X. Anaxagoras, authoritatively. "The third thing is that Jerry must commit a crime; and the fourth thing is that he must like it."

"A crime!" cried Betty, aghast.

"Oh, not a criminal crime, of course. Just a nice tidy crime. I think that part of it can be arranged. In fact, I have a good one all picked out."

"If you would not object to confiding in me?" murmured Betsy.

"Oh, not at all. I thought of kidnapping a Los Angeles real-estate man."

"Would you mind telling me why?"

"Oh, it seems a good sort of crime. Ought to make a lot of people happy, and all that sort of thing. Kidnapping is, I believe, discouraged by the law. Also marooning."

"He is to be marooned, then?"

"Of course. We should not want to keep a Los Angeles real-estate man on board for long."

"But why? There's no sense——"

"There is plenty of sense," interrupted X. Anaxagoras, blandly. "That will appear in the narrative."

"We should get into all sorts of trouble."

"No trouble," X. Anaxagoras pointed out, dreamily, "is too great to take for our dear Jerry."

"You can't be serious! It's the most preposterous thing I ever heard of in my life."

"I am entirely serious. And may I point out that the preposterous is the very soul of the unconventional. But that is in the future. Our first two objects are still to be attained. Let us fare forth hopeful in what the event may offer us."

CHAPTER IV

"NOW that we know what we have to do, we must find out what we have to do it with," said X. Anaxagoras. "What are our materials? There's the *Spindrift*, of course. She's adequate—seagoing, well provisioned, and all that. All she needs is the Jolly Roger at her gaff. How about the crew? Any good helpful criminals in the lot?"

Betsy considered, her eyes dancing. She had entered wholly into the spirit of the game.

"There are," she announced at last, "as far as I personally have been able to discover, three human beings and eight that go by clockwork. At least, they go by clockwork when I am around. I suspect there is a magic in the forecastle that turns them into human beings as soon as they enter its precincts. I have heard human sounds issuing therefrom. But I do not possess the magic myself."

"If you do not possess it, nobody does—yet. We will omit the automatic eight—at least, for the moment. Now, as to the three."

"I'll show you one." She leaned sidewise to touch an electric button.

After an instant a door opened to admit an individual dressed in the white starched clothes of a cabin steward.

He was slender, moderately young, with the most impassive countenance in the world, holding himself with ramrod correctness, but with alert eyes.

"Madam rang," he stated.

"What time is it?" asked Betsy.

"It is just gone five bells of the middle watch, madam."

"Thank you, Plutarch. Will you send Ramsey to me, please?"

"Very good, madam." He disappeared.

"That's one of them," said Betsy.

"H'm," commented X. Anaxagoras. He ruminated. "Why didn't he say half-past two and be done with it?"

"You are on shipboard," Betsy reminded him. "It isn't proper to mention a clock on shipboard."

"And did I understand you to call him Plutarch?"

"Precisely."

"Why?"

"He says that is his name. It is the only name he will give. I couldn't make it out myself for some time; not until I'd found he was human. Then he told me a former shipowner had called him that, and he liked it, so he adopted it. I think myself it's because he has had so many lives—most of them in his imagination. He's told me about a great many of them. Plutarch is very talkative to me off duty. I haven't discovered anything yet he hasn't been or done, so I am sure he must have included a life of crime among the others."

"Probably," assented X. Anaxagoras. "Of course, I have by now in my equipment, as you have probably surmised, all the magic lore of the East, including second

sight and the ability to distinguish auras. My skill, however, in this instance, I freely confess, would have been inadequate to distinguish this person as other than entirely and properly automatic. How did you do it?"

"Very simply. Just by being natural."

"Specifically?"

Betsy chuckled delightedly. "Well, the first time was the morning I came aboard from the train. He struck his attitude, and with his best steward chivalry he announced that my bath was drawn. I told him that was very nice, but if he'd just draw the tide I'd rather go swimming."

"What did he say to that?"

"Nothing, but it broke his ice. Next morning he respectfully inquired if it could be my toothbrush and mug he had found on deck. He lowered his tone as he said it, as if reassuring me that the secret would die with us two. I explained to him very nicely that I liked to brush my teeth overside because it mussed up the stars on the water. You know," she remarked, parenthetically, to her interlocutor, "that's about the only way one *can* be impudent to stars. Besides, I make phosphorescent starlets. I've never had any trouble with him since—in private. I think one of his lives must have been as a poet."

"His appreciation of your beautiful thought convinces me of it," assented X. Anaxagoras, dryly.

"Here's Ramsey," she said.

The door admitted a huge Negro dressed also in white with a white apron and a white cook's cap. His face was round as the full moon.

"Yes, *ma'am*," he announced himself. in a rich, comfortable voice.

"This is my brother, Ram. The Ram is our cook. He is a living testimonial of his own skill. He is an artist, too. His poems are the things he sends to table. You'll see. He is known as the Ram. Why, I do not know."

"Yes, *sir!*" the Ram acknowledged this introduction.

"Now, listen, Ram. For dinner to-night I want you to serve some fried salt pork with molasses poured over it, and some plain boiled potatoes. For dessert we will have sweet pickles."

An expression of pain crossed the Ram's broad countenance.

"Chick'n So'thern style," he murmured, "an' co'n fritters, an' some nice fresh aspa'gus——"

"What is that?" inquired Betsy.

"I was jest a-mentionin'."

"But you understand?"

"Are you-all *suah* you wants them things?" urged the Ram, anxiously.

"Certainly."

"Jus's you say, ma'am." The light behind his moon face seemed to have been withdrawn, leaving it in its natural darkness. He stood dejected, awaiting further orders.

"You see," Betsy pointed out to X. Anaxagoras, "I told you he'd commit a crime."

"But not cheerfully," objected X. Anaxagoras, doubtfully.

"That is too much to expect. I told you he is an artist." She surveyed the subdued Ram with open amusement. "On second thought," she said at length, "I believe we'll have the chicken. Somebody told me pork was good that way, but I don't think I'll try it, after all."

The full moon sailed from behind the clouds in all its glory.

"Thank you, *ma'am!*" cried the Ram, fervently. "And don't you go fo' to believe no such pussons. They don't know *nothin'*."

"That's all, then, Ram. See if you can find Rogg."

"Rogg's done gone ashore, ma'am, with Cap'n Marshall."

"That's two of them," said Betsy, after he had withdrawn. "The third is Rogg. Rogg is a dear."

"Why Rogg? That's a queer name."

"It isn't his name. It's what the men call him."

"Why?"

"I'll show you."

She uttered a shrill whistle. Almost instantly from some niche in the cabin a cat appeared, a tiger cat with jade-green eyes, a Pompeian-red grosgrain nose, and a remarkably short tail.

"Why, it's Noah!" cried X. Anaxagoras, greeting an old friend.

"Prrt!" remarked Noah, and leaped into his lap.

But now was heard a light scrambling on deck. At the top of the companionway materialized a small monkey. It did not descend into the cabin, but sat humped up on the top step, gazing down on them with its puckered, wise

old eyes. Its countenance was broad and lined, incredibly ancient, and superlatively ugly.

"What does he remind you of?—quick!" cried Betsy.

"Of a queer little old heathen idol," replied X. Anaxagoras, promptly.

She struck her hands together delightedly.

"That's it! Well, that is Roggsy. You'll know Rogg because they are exactly alike except for size."

"Rogg does sound like a heathen god."

"Of course. That's what the men call him, and I think it is their corruption of the name of some idol some of them have seen. Roggsy isn't allowed in here."

X. Anaxagoras examined Roggsy attentively.

"He is certainly ill endowed with pulchritude; but if his prototype is like him, he does not look like a criminal," he offered. "However, if you say so——"

"He's the kindest person in the world," cried Betsy, warmly. "He's almost pathetically kind. He's my favourite. We go sea-hunting together. He's the only one who understands my interest in sea pools. He's always finding me some new critter. He'll do anything I tell him."

"Accepted," said X. Anaxagoras to this last. "That is sufficient. Enrolled. And the rest, you say, are hopeless for high emprise?"

"I did not say that. I only said they are not human as far as I have been able yet to discover—except, perhaps, in the magic of the forecastle."

"Let me tell you something out of my occult Eastern lore," proffered X. Anaxagoras. "That magic is a very

subtle and peculiar magic. You will find that it can be released and spread all over the place. That's part of our job."

"I've tried to release it," confessed Betsy.

"It is terribly afraid of the Proper Thing," stated X. Anaxagoras.

CHAPTER V

THE following morning the *Spindrift* weighed anchor and departed. The skies were agleam with great piled masses of dazzling light made manifest against a deep blue. From the open gulf a clean, clear breeze sang through the great cedars of Stanley Park, fluttered gaily the pennons at the mastheads of the innumerable yachts, and frosted the smooth waters of the harbour with cats-paws. Across the way, in the distance of Vancouver's pile of buildings, the flag atop the high structure of the Vancouver Hotel stood out in brave display.

On deck the sail covers had been removed and neatly stowed, the stops thrown off. The mainsail, peak slackened, had been hoisted and shivered in the wind. Below, the hum of the engines vibrated. With a rattle of chains the anchor came apeak. The yacht's head swung. Under her counter the screw churned the water. She gathered way and headed down the narrow channel past the old Coal Hulk, and so out into the swift tideway of the First Narrows. At the instant of getting under way, the staff and ensign mysteriously vanished from the stern; another ensign fluttered to the main peak.

Once outside the Narrows, and beyond the influence of the heavy current, the *Spindrift* spread her white wings. Below, the hum of the engine died. A subtle vibration,

unnoticed before, now made itself evident by its cessation. Gracefully the *Spindrift* heeled over on the starboard tack and began to slip through the water with that hissing, effortless, buoyant, yet restrained live smoothness to be experienced only under sail.

"Like to feel her?" Marshall asked X. Anaxagoras. During all these manœuvres the young yachtsman had stood alertly at the wheel, a pipe gripped in his teeth, a keen eye on all details, occasionally barking out a brief order.

The other took the wheel, glancing aloft at the telltale. He turned the spokes now this way, now that, trying her response, then brought her to a course that held the luff of the foresail only just without the shaking point.

"She's a sweet thing," said he.

"She foots it within four points of the wind," replied Marshall, with pride.

"She's a sweet thing," repeated the Healer of Souls, "and she's sweetly kept. A fine craft and a fine crew, Jerry; and you've a right to be proud of her. She'd take you anywhere."

Marshall made no reply, but his face showed his gratification. Forward a sailorman, in whom X. Anaxagoras had no difficulty in recognizing Rogg, was slowly ascending the windward ratlines of the mainmast. Roggsy perched on his shoulder, experiencing apparently no difficulty either in maintaining his own position or in avoiding interference with his master. The two were indeed almost ludicrously alike except in the matter of vivacity. Roggsy was of a nervous, quick-moving, suddenly leaping

habit. Rogg moved deliberately and with gravity, as beseemed his thick round body, his broad shoulders, his long arms, and his huge hands. X. Anaxagoras commented on this amusedly.

"Yes," Betsy agreed, anxiously, "and it has always seemed to me that Roggsy has a great responsibility. I hope he appreciates it and will keep up his spirits. If *he* should happen to get solemn, then I'm convinced Rogg would have to get flighty. To keep the balance, you know; like the old man and the old woman in the tin barometer. It would be dreadful if Rogg suddenly took to leaping about the rigging or sitting on the rail and chattering. I don't think I could stand it."

Having reached the spreader, the sailor hooked his leg over it and swaying easily to the motion of the vessel, he methodically uncoiled, rove through a block, and let down to the deck a small line he had been carrying. To the end of this one of the men attached a thing like an exaggerated half barrel with a trapdoor in the bottom, which was then hoisted to the spreader. With some difficulty Rogg swung this in front of the topmast, perched it on the masthead, and proceeded to lash it fast by means of ringbolts. In the meantime, Roggsy, having abandoned his post, was skylarking bewilderingly but surely about the rigging. The last hitch made and tested, Rogg whistled. Roggsy made a flying dash and alighted again on his shoulder. The sailor unhooked his leg and slowly descended the ratlines. On the masthead the half barrel perched, an excrescence on the beautiful flowing taper of the yacht's upflung spars.

X. Anaxagoras watched this proceeding without comment until it was quite finished.

"You have certainly a competent crow's nest," he then remarked. "What is this—a whaling expedition?"

"We certainly could be identified as far as we could be seen," replied Marshall, with almost bitterness. "Did you ever see such a sight on a decent craft?"

"It is unusual," agreed X. Anaxagoras. "May I ask why?"

"It was either that or lose a wife."

"And I consider the choice a rare compliment," cut in Betsy. "I look on it as a symbol of our love," she added, in mock sentiment.

"I look on it as a symbol of plain tomfoolishness," rejoined Marshall, a trifle snappishly.

"But it's there, isn't it, dear? And it's *such* a tribute."

"Perhaps someone would elucidate," suggested X. Anaxagoras, patiently.

"She was always up in the cross trees," said Marshall, shortly. "Couldn't keep her out. I made up my mind if she *would* go up there in spite of anything I could say, I'd make it safe, anyway. It's a hell of a looking thing."

"If you'd only let me paint it sky-blue," murmured Betsy.

"*With* black polka dots," grumbled Marshall.

"Sometimes"—Betsy turned to her brother—"you see, the yacht gets too small for me, much too small. It restricts my orbit. Then I like to go up there and be a radio antenna and broadcast myself into all space. *Does*

the radio antenna broadcast as well as receive? You understand, don't you?"

"I understand perfectly," said X. Anaxagoras.

"The yacht is so small, 'way down below, that it seems as if just my weight would tip her over. I'm balanced, poised, as if only my own wings held me. And I swing slowly and widely as if I were sowing largely of myself into space—oh, it's wonderful and big and freeing. It's worth a barrel on top of a mast. Now, isn't it?"

"I suppose it is, if you want it," grudgingly acknowledged Marshall. "But it certainly looks like the devil!"

"It's worth worse than barrels," agreed X. Anaxagoras. He squinted aloft. "Darned if I don't like its looks."

Marshall stared at him in amazement.

At this moment Plutarch, having apparently accumulated enough ectoplasm at this particular spot, suddenly and mysteriously materialized his personality into it.

"Goodness, Plutarch!" cried Betsy. "How do you do it? You always give me the jumps, appearing suddenly like that."

"Sorry, madam. Luncheon is served."

From somewhere in the depths of the vessel came two soft, silvery notes. Instantly from the foremast foot came the clang of a bell struck twice.

"Two bells, and a-a-l-l-'s well!" intoned an unseen sailor.

The mate came aft and took the wheel. The three descended to the cabin. The table now had been provided with racks in little compartments.

"Do you like to reach up for your food or down for

your food?" asked Betsy, gaily. "I told you we lived on a slant!"

"Ho! for a sailor's life, a free sheet and a flowing sea!" cried the Healer of Souls, "and the great adventure that always awaits the seeker!"

"It's the life!" chimed in Marshall, "but this adventure stuff: lay off it. Adventure on a boat, in my experience, generally means trouble. We haven't had any yet, and we don't want any."

"Adventure waits around the corner," insisted X. Anaxagoras. "I can hear the rustle of her wings!"

CHAPTER VI

BUT if adventure awaited around the corner, the corner appeared to be a long way off. They cruised happily, to be sure, but quite uneventfully, for many days, passing in turn one by one old landmarks and memories, greeting old friends and acquaintances made on their former voyage together in this Northern country. The landmarks were the same as before, but some subtle difference of reserve on the part of the inhabitants puzzled Marshall. They were not quite as he remembered them. He was wholeheartedly glad to see them once more, and they in turn displayed a proper cordiality, but it was a cordiality overlaid with something.

"Difference between the *Kittiwake* and the *Spindrift*," X. Anaxagoras commented to Betsy. "No, let him find it out for himself."

Nor did the Healer of Souls again, even remotely, refer to the professional interview with which this narrative opened. Indeed, he appeared to have forgotten that aspect of himself entirely, and consumed his days in an alternation of reading, sitting on deck with a pipe, and wandering about the yacht, interestedly making her acquaintance in all details, and talking to the men. Marshall made one or two approaches toward the subject, was met by the fantastic bafflement his brother-in-law knew so

well how to command, and, with relief, himself set aside that aspect of their relations.

They passed through the maze of passages and inlets south of Blackfish Sound, sometimes under sail, more often with canvas furled and the engines going. The weather throughout had been beautiful. Now, however, they approached the fog belt that must be traversed before the clear skies of Alaska should again be certain. And to-day the fog belt was justifying its name. They moved in a thick, lucent mist, and Marshall, X. Anaxagoras, and the mate were all gathered about the wheel, combining their skill and knowledge. Betsy's crow's nest was for the nonce occupied by a lookout man in the person of Rogg. Betsy herself perched on the capstan forward. A sailor near the after hatch at intervals worked a crank that actuated a bellows that, in turn, emitted a long, hollow groan. In addition, Marshall from time to time pulled the air-whistle cord. Then the entire yacht fell silent and everybody listened intently for an echo that should indicate the proximity of islands or rocks. Throughout all the ship's company was that nervous, intent, uneasy alertness that is aroused only by a fog in uncertain, broken, or unknown waters. Roggsy perched humped and disgruntled in a sheltered corner. Even the Ram had deserted his galley and, an unusual solemnity adding a quite superfluous shadow to his countenance, was gazing ahead.

"The worst of it is these confounded currents," observed Marshall, impatiently, breaking the silence. "You can figure out where you ought to be all right; but you can't

tell where the currents may have set you! We ought to be hearing from Disaster Point about now." He pulled the whistle rope. All listened. Nothing! "Nice cheerful optimist named this country!" he grumbled. "Disaster Point, Desolation Sound, Wreck Reef, Beware Passage, Destruction Point, Grief Point——"

Nobody replied. All understood that the skipper was merely relieving pressure.

The sailor mechanically cranked his machine. In answer to its hoarse shout a booming bellow blared through the mist dead ahead. Marshall's hand jerked to the engine-room bell. The yacht came to a quivering standstill. The water fell quiet under her counter as the reverse ceased to operate. She lay gently rocking in the smooth swell. All listened.

Nothing. Marshall waved his hand toward the sailor operating the foghorn. It squawked, and almost immediately was answered from out the mists.

"No lighthouses up here as I remember it," stated Marshall, but in a tone of inquiry.

"No, sir; none," rejoined Benton, positively.

"Doesn't sound like any ship's foghorn I ever heard though."

"No, sir; more like a fixed signal."

Benton took two steps to their own foghorn, thrust the sailor aside, and manipulated the crank, one long blast followed by three short ones. After a long interval he was answered; but, as before, only by the single long-drawn-out note.

"Private signal; not in the books," he explained to

X. Anaxagoras. "But everyone navigating this coast knows it. Either that fellow's a cod-headed damn fool. or we're up against a fixed signal."

"Maybe it's a new establishment," suggested the Healer of Souls.

"What I was thinking, sir. But why isn't it reported in this year's 'Information for Mariners'? They don't grow these things overnight."

Marshall rang again, and the yacht's engines fell silent.

"I don't hear any engine," he voiced the result of a short interval of intense listening. "I'd better start up again to keep under control." He signalled the engineer, and the yacht began to creep forward at a snail's pace.

X. Anaxagoras sauntered forward to where Betsy sat on the bitts. He clenched his pipe in his teeth, his hands were deep in his pockets, and his face was alight. She glanced up at him as he approached.

"What is it, Sid?" she asked, struck by his expression.

"My psychic antennæ are vibrating," said he. "I smell adventure."

"Fog thinning aloft, sir," came Rogg's voice from the crow's nest.

The invisible horn continued to blare at intervals, but the exact direction or distance of its source was rendered uncertain by the peculiar and baffling acoustic properties of the fog. At each repetition everybody aboard the yacht strained his ears; and at each silence exchanged low-voiced opinions, all different.

With the shattering effect of an explosion the lookout man's voice came again from aloft. At the same instant

Roggsy sprang to life. Deserting his humped-up perch he leaped to the fore topping lift, ran nimbly up it, jumped to the spreader, and began madly to race around and around it. The effect was of the release from a spell, a pearl-gray, clogging, muffled spell cast on sight and sound by the spirit of the fog.

"Cow ho!" cried Roggs.

A moment's incredulous silence was broken by an exasperated bellow of inquiry from both Marshall and his mate.

"Cow ho!" Roggs obligingly repeated.

"You triple idiot!" shouted Marshall, "what are you talking about?"

"It's a cow, sir," explained Roggs. "I can see her above the fog. She's standing on a sort of high peak of rock that sticks up. Five points to sta'board, sir. She's a spotted cow," he added, after a moment, "and she's got a calf with her."

"What in the name of Peter the Hermit do you suppose I care for her colour or her calf!" roared Marshall, exasperated.

Benton was already eagerly searching the chart.

"It must be this little group here, sir," he indicated. "We've been set west'ard by the tides."

"No bottom at ten," sang out the leadsman, who, unbidden, had cast his lead.

Marshall's countenance showed his gratification at this prompt evidence of efficiency.

In the bow Betsy was looking at her chuckling brother.

"You knew it was a cow!" she accused him.

"I told you my psychic antennæ were quivering. You see each and every living thing has its own especial aura which it emanates, or in the midst of which it lives, so to speak. When two living things come near enough to each other the auras come in contact or perhaps slightly intermingle. One who is sensitive or especially trained in the lore of the Mahatmas is aware of that fact, and may even identify the nature of that aura. It's very simple." He caught Betsy's accusing eye. "And then, too," he continued, "it sounded like a cow."

CHAPTER VII

THE fog continued to thin overhead while still remaining opaque below, as is often the habit of fogs. Dazzling bits of sky became visible, like blue jewels set in cotton wool. Those on deck shortly became possessed of the vision that had earlier been vouchsafed Rogg, nearer Heaven. On a flat-topped spire of rock stood a veritable spotty cow, with a smaller but gangle-legged replica of herself snuggled alongside. The spire lifted sheer from the rolling fog clouds below. Its top was perhaps ten feet across: its sides apparently almost precipitous. The cow was as though upon an altar. There needed only a few seraphim or cherubim leaning their chins over the clouds below to complete an entirely appropriate setting for an Adoration of Motherhood. The idea was put forward by Betsy.

"Should the cherubim be small chubby calves' heads with wings?" she inquired, "or perhaps little fat pigs?"

Appropriate leisure for the admiration of the spectacle was, however, denied them. The spell was broken by the sudden appearance alongside of an agitated man in a small boat. He was a stockily built person, with a round red face, a shock of brown hair, and an anxious and serious eye.

"Say," he called, without preliminary, "can some of you fellows help me with my cow?"

"What's the matter with your cow?" asked Marshall.

"I can't get her down. She's clumb up atop and she can't get down. I never knew a more gentle cow, but I can't do nothing with her. She never acted this way before. Something must have scared her; and then she had her calf, and now she's gone crazy. If my piston-rod bearing hadn't give out, me and my partner might have done something, but as it is, she ain't had a drop or a bite for two days except what I've got up to her, and what with a new calf—by golly, you fellers come along just right!"

"With the permission of the owner, here," struck in X. Anaxagoras, who in common with the entire yacht's company was leaning over the rail, "I would propose that you come on deck and embroider with the glittering high lights of lucidity your suggestive but somewhat obscure narrative."

The man stared at him.

"Huh?" he ejaculated.

"Come aboard and have a drink and tell us about it."

The owner of the cow, painter in hand, immediately swarmed over the side. The observant Plutarch caught the key word as quickly and was almost immediately back with the bottle. Marshall cast a scandalized eye about him.

"Are you crazy?" he shouted to a crew who had to a man deserted their posts in the bizarre interest of these events. "Get back on the job! Do you want to drift on the rocks?"

"Better drop your hook," suggested the stranger, his eye on the bottle.

"Is there good bottom here?" queried Marshall, doubtfully.

"Sure. And good shelter. You're in Graveyard Cove."

"By the mark, seven!" sang out the leadsman, hastily.

"Let go the anchor!" commanded Marshall, sharply.

These things being satisfactorily arranged, the more serious business of the day could go forward. X. Anaxagoras had possessed himself of the bottle and was slowly drawing the cork.

"The cow," he observed, "is, as perhaps you know, a sacred animal among the Hindus. It therefore possesses for me, as a humble Follower of the Path, a peculiar interest and significance. The sight of one of these animals elevated to a position that I can only regard as symbolical is significant of more than chance. I can see in this concatenation of circumstances an interweaving of the threads of Karma which may——"

"Give me that bottle!" Betsy interrupted him, severely.

She removed the cork and handed it, together with a tall glass from Plutarch's tray, to the newcomer. X. Anaxagoras sighed.

"Blinded," he murmured, "—not so particularly to my occult lore as to the alcoholic habits of the local native."

The glass was intended for highballs, the soda for which was ready on the tray. The man filled it three-fourths full of whisky. This he at once prepared to drink.

"Don't you take any water?" gasped Betsy.

"Not if the whisky is good, ma'am."

He drank it down in long gulps, set down the glass without a shudder, and, thus fortified, gave an account of him-

self. He lived, it seems, with his partner on another small island a few miles distant. They ran a cattle ranch. X. Anaxagoras pricked up his ears at this statement.

"How many head of stock have you?" he asked.

"Eleven," said the man. "We had twelve last year, but we killed one for beef." He did not reply to the Healer of Souls, of whom he seemed to have suspicions, but to Marshall. Indeed, this was his invariable subsequent procedure.

The spotted cow, being about to calve, and the grass becoming scant on the "ranch," the idea had occurred to him to transfer her to this island for better forage. So he did so.

"How?" asked Betsy.

"In my gas boat, ma'am."

"But how?"

"I just put her in the cockpit and brought her over."

"I don't see how in the world——"

"It was easy enough, ma'am. I never knew a more gentle cow. Only trouble was, it was choppy and she got seasick some."

The crossing and the landing had been successfully accomplished. All seemed to be going well. Then trouble began. The cow, after falling to eagerly on the new feed, had been seized by a sudden panic.

"I can't think what ailed her," complained the man. "There wa'n't nothing I could see to scare her. But she begun to run around and bellow and curl her tail, and I couldn't do nothing with her nohow. And she's the gentlest critter I ever see. I quit trying to get nigh her,

because I didn't want her to run around and get het up—she with her calf, you see—but that didn't do no good. And how she done it, I don't know, but somehow she managed to scramble right up to the top of the island. Why, a goat couldn't hardly make it! Once she got up there, she quietened down, but there she was! She can't get down nohow, and I can't figger no way to *get* her down. She's had her calf up there, and there ain't no food or water, so I had to carry up what I could, and she just stands there and bellers. And then when I started to go get my partner to figger something out, my engine breaks down; and I ain't got no small boat with me, and there I am."

"In your estimate of your cattle holdings, did you include the calf?" inquired X. Anaxagoras.

"Huh?"

"Have you eleven head counting or not counting the calf?"

"The calf makes twelve."

"What on earth has that to do with it?" demanded Betsy.

"I was just figuring whether it meant a nine per cent. or an eight and a half per cent. loss," submitted her brother, meekly. "At any rate, a heavy loss for any large industry."

The stranger looked at X. Anaxagoras suspiciously but otherwise ignored him.

"You can just bet I was glad to hear you fellows whistling," he concluded his narrative.

The fog was now returning into the invisible. There

was no motion, just a withdrawal as though into a fourth dimension without disturbance of the three in which we live. The surroundings were becoming distinguishable. The *Spindrift* was shortly seen to be at anchor in a crescent-shaped bight with long rocky arms on either side. A sparsely wooded shore rose by a series of low, rocky terraces to the central spire on the top of which stood the spotty cow and her calf. The spire was perhaps ten feet high above the last terrace and seemed to afford various small hand- or foot-holds in the shape of miniature ledges and crevices, but would appear to be, as the cow's owner had said, problematically scalable to even the skiptious goat.

"Do you mean to say that cow actually climbed up there?" demanded Marshall, after surveying the situation.

"I don't think she flew," said the man; and he said it seriously, which pleased Betsy.

"Well, let's go ashore and look things over," suggested Marshall. "I expect we'll have to help out."

"Any objection to the men landing, sir?" inquired Benton. "Good chance to stretch their legs."

"None. But leave one aboard."

The small boats were put overside and shortly the ship's crew stood on the island. Even Roggsy, perched on the shoulder of his familiar, went along. They ascended twenty feet by the series of broad, shallow terraces, where they grouped themselves at the foot of the spire and looked up. The cow looked down.

"It's plain enough where she got up," observed Marshall after a pause; "she could do it if she scrambled hard and kept scrambling. And it's equally plain why she

doesn't get down. But I believe she might be led down, if it were done carefully."

"I figured that," agreed the cow's owner, "if she'd come down gentle; but she's all het up and excited. And she's the gentlest critter I ever see. You can do anything with her. But now I can't even get a rope on her."

A deprecating cough called attention to Plutarch.

"Beg pardon, sir; but if I might try? You see, sir, I was cow hand for two years in the Argentine pampas, and I learned methods."

"A hundred and sixty-seven," murmured Betsy.

X. Anaxagoras raised an inquiring eyebrow in her direction.

"It's Plutarch's age," she explained to him, aside, "according to the number of years he says he has done different things. He was a hundred and sixty-five yesterday."

Receiving permission, Plutarch procured a rope and rapidly climbed to the miniature plateau, to the farther edge of which the cow promptly retired with her calf behind her.

"You see," said Plutarch, modestly, addressing the multitude from his ten-foot vantage point, "it's partly confidence and partly secret master words which have been known to animal tamers from time immemorial."

"If you know any secret master words, you'd better say them quick!" warned X. Anaxagoras, suddenly.

Without waiting for the secret words, and disregarding the confidence entirely, the cow uttered a bellow and dashed at Plutarch. The latter, caught unawares by this

unsportsmanlike conduct, recovered his wits only in time to dodge sidewise and escape impalement by the skin of his teeth. Now ensued a brief but lively game of tag within most inadequate boundaries. The cow was It, but seemed likely not long to remain so. Before the spectators could either formulate an idea for rescue or even make a move toward it, Plutarch, escaping death thrice by a handbreadth, was seen to topple for a moment on the far edge, throw up his hands, and disappear.

Cries and movements. Above the confusion rose the voice of the cow's owner.

"Can he swim?" roared the man.

Several voices answered him in the affirmative.

"Then he's all right. The cliff is straight up on that side into deep water. They's no rocks there."

Two men tumbled into the dinghy and rowed madly around the nearer of the two points. Suspended action for a short interval. Shortly the dinghy reappeared, and all could see that Plutarch sat now in the stern sheets, streaming sea water. His remarks could not be distinguished at the distance, but from his posture, gestures, and the sound of his voice, it was evident that he was addressing the spotty cow.

"Undoubtedly the secret words, though a trifle belated," observed X. Anaxagoras. "The creature should now be quite tamed."

The men burst into laughter, in which Betsy and Marshall joined. Only the cow's owner remained serious.

"I never see her act up so before," said he. "She's the gentlest critter——"

"Well," urged Marshall, genially, "any more volunteers? Any more buckaroos in this outfit?"

He ran his eye over the crew, grinning cheerfully at them. They grinned back, glanced at each other, shook their heads.

"No? Well, come on, boys, let's see what we can do."

X. Anaxagoras, seated on a rock, was holding his pipe suspended. His lips were apart and his head aslant as though he listened.

"Didn't you hear it?" he asked Betsy, aside, after a moment. "It was distinctly perceptible."

"What?" she asked, puzzled.

"The first faint crackling of convention; the first faint rustling of wings as the new spirit hovers."

"Are you supposed to be talking sense, Sid?" she inquired, politely, but with exaggerated patience.

"Of the best. Doesn't it strike you that 'come on, boys' is in a different category from 'squads right,' as you called it? And did you see them swap grins?"

"I can't say that strikes me——"

"It's the first faint crackling; it's the first faint rustling of wings!" insisted the Healer of Souls. "Not for nothing is the cow a sacred animal among those who understand mysterious things! The Adventure is at hand!"

CHAPTER VIII

MARSHALL was warming up to the situation. He had been sitting on a rock, like Betsy and his brother-in-law, as a spectator. Now he arose and became the central figure—with due deference to the cow.

"Plutarch had the right idea—in a way," said he. "The first thing is to get a rope on her. Got to get hold of her. I don't know much about cows, but I do know that with a rope around the base of the horns you can do 'most anything with them, and around the neck is no good. That right?" he asked the cow's owner. "By the way, what's your name?"

"My name's Teller. Yes, that's right."

"Any of you men throw a lariat? No? How about you? You're a ranchman."

"I ain't never tried."

"Well, I can't either—to amount to much. But I've had to catch my horse a few times down in the cow country. Get me a three-eighths line and tie a small bowline in one end to run the loop through."

Armed with this impromptu lasso he started toward the rock.

"You aren't going up there!" cried Betsy, alarmed.

"Don't worry: I have the greatest respect for the old girl."

He made his way to a point just below the little plateau, assured himself of a good foothold, whirled the loop around his head, cowboy fashion, and began to cast. The cow backed away to the far edge, planted her feet, and snorted. The position was awkward, Marshall's skill negligible, and the cow proved to be unexpectedly clever in ducking. Again and again Marshall hurled the rope, dragged it back empty, and reformed the loop. Sometimes the loop would not spread; sometimes the rope fell short; at encouraging moments it fell across the cow; twice it actually settled over the horns and the attentive bystanders uttered a yell, but before Marshall, in his unfavourable position, could take in the slack, the cow lowered her head and flipped her horns and the wide loop slipped off. By now the sun was shining brightly. Marshall took off his coat and wiped his brow.

"Gosh, this is hot work!" he remarked.

After the hundredth cast or so, he paused for a rest.

"I'm afraid I'm no Buffalo Bill," he confessed, after another series of failures. "One of you row off and tell that ineffable ass, Plutarch, to come ashore and have a try. He ought to know how to throw a lasso if he was an Argentine *gaucho* for two years."

While one of the men was gone in the dinghy, he leaned against the rock, resting. Presently the emissary returned.

"Plutarch says they didn't lasso them down where he was," reported the man, grinning. "He says they used bolos."

"Humph!" grunted Marshall. "He's better read than I imagined."

He took up the rope again and hurled the loop carelessly and disgustedly in the general direction of the cow. It settled about the animal's horns!

"Stand by!" "Haul her!" "Take in your slack!" broke out a chorus of yells.

The loop tightened. Marshall descended from his elevated perch, bringing with him the end of the long line.

"Now you've got her, what are you going to do with her?" murmured the Healer of Souls.

But Marshall, now wholly in the spirit of solving a difficult problem, had his ideas.

"Get the calf down, and she'll follow of her own accord," he replied, promptly. "Here, some of you fellows take the end of the rope and keep her from charging at me, and I'll see what can be done."

The cow securely tethered to one end of the plateau, Marshall ventured to mount to the other. Then ensued a game, first of blandishment—futile—then of dodge. The calf had been instructed by Mother to view all proceedings with suspicion; on no account to do anything he was expected to do; and to distrust all creatures that did not progress on four legs. Infantile as he was, the calf had understood and obeyed perfectly—a wonderful example to the young independents of other species. Only once did Marshall seem to be making progress and the calf to be falling from the grace of filial obedience. He almost had his hands on the creature. That instant was chosen by Roggsy to desert his master's shoulder, skip lightsomely up the crag, and appear suddenly, grimacing and gibbering

joyously. Marshall cursed and hurled a vindictive pebble at Roggsy. The monkey took this for a game and chased the pebble, which he retrieved and presented to Rogg, who presently obeyed advice from all quarters to tie up that damn monkey.

"That won't work," confessed Marshall, at length, descending the cliff.

"If you did get the calf, probably the cow wouldn't be calm enough to pick her way down so difficult a path," consoled Betsy. "Your flannels are a sight!"

"There's something in that," assented Marshall. "Darn my flannels."

"She's always been the gentlest critter I ever——"

"Well, she's reformed now," Marshall cut him short. "Any suggestions, anybody?"

The two groups had gradually drawn together until now masters and crew were gathered close. Nobody said anything for a moment.

"How about shoving her off the side where Plutarch took the high dive?" at length ventured one of the men.

"There's an idea there!" approved Marshall.

"She'd bust herself wide open falling from that high up!" hastily interposed Teller, in alarm.

"How about shoving her off and then lowering her down with the rope around her horns, then?" amended the author of the suggestion.

"We could all tail on to the rope on this side, run it over the top, and then slack away," eagerly interposed another.

They gathered in a close group and discussed ways and

means. It was agreed that a roller of some kind would be needed to pass the rope over so it would not chafe through. Also some sort of padded poles for the shoving. Nobody seemed to fancy doing any shoving with the naked hands. Also a selected squad to shove, and another to pull. The plan gathered complications, fantastic nautical complications of men accustomed to the sea but not to cows. Teller, who had been listening with more and more bewilderment, finally dashed the whole scheme.

"With her scraping and bumping down that cliff," said he, "she'd break a leg sure."

"We'll have to rig some sort of crane to sling her from," put in Benton, who had heretofore remained silent. "Then we can run her over and let her down easy."

"That's the idea!" cried Marshall.

A new committee of the whole was formed. Three men held the cow back by the rope while all the rest swarmed up the cliff to examine the engineering possibilities. Cranes were more in line with a sailorman's experience. The matter of a suitable foundation and pivot was soon determined. There would need to be two stout timbers: one upright and firmly guyed; the other attached loosely to its foot like a boom. A block on the end of each through which ropes could be rove would permit manipulation either up or down or sidewise. Then reave the cow's rope through the end of the boom, hoist her off her feet, sling her sidewise into space, and lower away!

This masterpiece of planning by a dozen eagerly interested small boys—for that was what they had all become—

was no sooner rounded out in all details, than an obvious and damning fact ruined it. On the little island there grew no trees big enough to furnish materials! There were no trees big enough—so Teller admitted—on any of the islands near by.

At this realization a consternation blank of everything but baffled irritation fell upon the spirits of the multitude. With one accord all stared at the cow; with one accord all cursed the cow. One or two even cursed Teller for daring to own the cow. Teller was quite meek but very anxious and worried, and only muttered that she was the gentlest cow he had ever known. Which, of course, helped.

"Better shoot the fool and use her up for beef and be done with it!" sighed Marshall, wearily.

Into this lull obtruded the splash of oars. It had not been noticed that some time previous the Ram had withdrawn. Now he was to be seen, in full white regalia, his huge bulk nearly filling the little dinghy, placidly paddling to shore. He beached his craft, deliberately shipped his oars, heaved himself on the strand, and approached.

"Lunching," he remarked, with dignity, "is served. Gittin' cows down offen rocks is no job on an empty stummick."

"Good Lord! it's two o'clock!" cried Marshall, glancing at his wrist watch. "The Ram has the right idea. Get aboard and feed."

The cow, released from pressure, advanced to the edge of the little plateau, dragging her rope after her. She stared down at them with the unfocussed bulging-eyed imbecility of the rattled bovine.

"Bl-a-a-a!" she bellowed, and in the cry there seemed to be a note of sneering scorn.

"Make it snappy!" ordered Marshall, "—a half hour. Teller, you go aboard and eat with the men. I'm going to get that damn cow down if it takes a leg!"

CHAPTER IX

THE cabin of the *Spindrift* had never before witnessed such a sight. Marshall had washed himself and smoothed his hair, but otherwise he came as he was. And he was distinctly both dishevelled and somewhat stained. Furthermore, he was distrait and in a hurry.

"Cut out the flumdoodle," he commanded the subdued Plutarch. "Rustle that grub. Bring it in and let's get it over with." Then he fell into a ruminative silence evidently wholly occupied with cows and mechanics. From forward came wild, unrestrained bursts of laughter, a noisy hilarity that ordinarily would have attracted his unfavourable notice. He paid no attention. He made only one remark.

"If we only had an upright, we could take the yacht's main boom for the sling," was what he said.

This remark X. Anaxagoras seemed to consider significant, for he flashed a glance at his sister.

"The first faint rustling of wings!" he murmured.

Marshall swallowed his food hastily and without further comment. Then suddenly he bellowed for Plutarch.

That astonished individual, accustomed to being summoned gently and electrically as though by the lascivious pleadings of a lute, popped in with unwonted haste.

"Bring that man Teller in here—the cow man," commanded Marshall.

"In here, sir?"

"I said here!"

Plutarch popped out again, looking slightly scandalized.

"Sit down," invited Marshall, when the ranchman had been ushered in. "Tell me, how deep is the water on the other side of the island just under the cliff?"

"It's about eight or ten fathom."

"Sure?"

"Yes, I've caught cod there."

"Any rocks or shoals?"

"No, she runs off sheer and clean.'

"How close in could a craft like this get?"

"Lord, you could tie up to the cliff if you wanted to."

Marshall hit the table with satisfaction.

"All right!" he cried. "I've got it! It's as simple as falling off a log. We'll take the *Spindrift* around there right under the confounded cow. We'll use our main topmast as our upright and our main boom as the sling."

"You can't raise it high enough," interposed X. Anaxagoras, quickly.

"We'll unshackle it, and hoist it, and shackle it to the mast high enough up."

"It'll mar your mast."

"Hang the mast! I wish it were taller. We can't hoist her clear; but we can pull her off sideways and catch her weight as she comes off the plateau. It'll work perfectly, if only the weather will continue calm."

"It's going to take a lot of rigging. It will make an

awful mess of things," objected X. Anaxagoras, earnestly. "You can't do that!"

"Oh, what of it!" Marshall brushed this aside with the irritation aroused by unessential obstacles. "Whose boat is it, anyway? I beg your pardon, old man; I didn't mean that. But I'm going to get that cow!"

He was as eager as a boy. Leaping from his seat, he ran on deck. The crew, already fed, were up from below.

Now the usual procedure would have been for Marshall to call Benton aft, to him communicate his plans and his desires, and then to leave the actual commands to his mate. Instead, he thrust forward into the group by the forecastle.

"I've got it worked out," he told them, rapidly, and detailed his scheme. When he had finished he looked to them as to human beings for approval or suggestion. They approved, to a man. Strangely enough, it was Rogg, the reliable but stupid, who offered the suggestion.

"They's over a twenty-foot tide in these waters, sir," said he, "so if you pull her off at high tide you'd gain that much on her."

"Good man, Rogg!" cried Marshall. Benton had already dived for the tide tables. They flipped the pages. "Here we are, Port Simpson—it won't be far off Port Simpson tides here—June 22—high water 19.7 feet at 22:48—why in blazes don't they say 10:48 P.M. and be done with it! We can't do it to-day. It's 19.5 feet to-morrow morning. We'll do it then. It'll take us the rest of the day to get rigged, anyway."

Marshall underestimated the activity of sailormen at work on a job they really understand and in a cause that

has enlisted their fervent interest. The boom was unshackled and replaced as high up the mast as seemed practicable; the necessary blocks and running gear were installed; the contraption was swung and tested and pronounced satisfactory by the middle of the first dog watch. Satisfied that nothing more could be done until the next day, Marshall went below to remove the signs of toil when he was recalled by frenzied yells of terror accompanied by shrieks of joy. He rushed on deck. The improvised crane was already in use. Suspended in a bowline and swung out thirty feet above the water, dangled and swayed the portly form of the Ram. He had hold of the rope above his head, kicked wildly in all directions, and was impartially yelling wild terror and detailing the surgical operations he and his carving knife were going to perform. At the end of the falls three men alternately lowered him on a run almost to souse into the water, and raised him as rapidly to the full height of the boom-end. Roggsy, immensely excited, was running as fast as he could down the fall, over the Ram's struggling body and back to the block again, mad as a puppy chasing itself around a lawn. The men looked slightly abashed at Marshall's appearance, slung the boom inboard, and gently deposited the demoralized Ram on the deck.

"Just testing the falls, sir," one of the men proffered.

Marshall made no comment, but his mouth twitched.

"Belay and snug down," he commanded, and returned below.

But shortly appeared Teller from the shore, where he

had been thrusting some fodder and a pail of water up to the plateau. He had a new and disconcerting idea, which was that it was very possible that during the night the noose might fall loose and the cow be enabled to slip it off her horns. This horrible thought gave pause to all satisfaction. Marshall retired into executive session with himself to grapple with the new problem. Finally, he summoned Benton and explained the difficulty.

"We've got to keep that noose from slipping open," said he, "and the only way to do it that I can see is to throw a couple of half hitches above it around the beast's horns. It can be done, I think, by flipping the slack of the rope in a sort of loop and giving it a twist that will cross it as it flips. See what I mean?"

Benton said that he did.

"Well, send one of the men over to try it. On no account must he get up on to the plateau with that crazy animal. I don't want any accidents."

He went below to finish his interrupted toilet, which he did leisurely. After a bath and a complete change he returned to the deck to find that he was absolutely alone on the yacht, except for Noah and Roggsy. The latter had been tied to a stanchion and was indignant. On the last ledge below the pinnacle were closely grouped the missing ship's company intently watching a man who, head and shoulders above the level of the plateau, was painstakingly flipping in hopeful spirals the bight of the line toward a brace-legged and snortsome cow. After a number of trials he desisted, and to an accompaniment of

somewhat subdued jeers clambered down to the level of the company. Another man deposited something in a hat that lay on the ground, spat on his hands, climbed to the edge of the pinnacle, and in his turn began to flip the rope.

Marshall glanced overside. At least they had had the grace to leave him his own dinghy! He dropped into it and rowed ashore.

On his appearance activities ceased and a slight cloud of uneasy uncertainty fell upon the occasion. X. Anaxagoras took upon himself an explanation.

"It is a game," said he, "an excellent game in that it combines the elements of chance, of skill, and the hope of pecuniary gain. You deposit ten cents in the hat, and in return therefor you are allowed ten tries. If you succeed in throwing a half hitch, you are rewarded by the contents of the hat. I have myself already contributed twenty cents, which, I am bound to confess, I am beginning to believe irretrievably lost to me. Want to join? If you have not ten cents, I am sure your credit is good."

"Thanks; I've just cleaned up," replied Marshall, dryly. "But don't let me interrupt. I'll watch."

He went to seat himself by Betsy, who was perched near by, a book in her lap. The game was renewed, at first a little deprecatingly, but soon with noisy hilarity. Marshall picked up the book. It was Victor Hugo's "Toilers of the Sea."

"I brought it as a textbook," Betsy explained. "I thought it might be helpful. A man in it does incredible

and ingenious feats in moving awkward sea things about."

A wild cheer greeted Plutarch's extremely lucky cast. He descended, emptied the hat.

"It's just a twist of the wrist," he announced, loftily. "It's not unlike handling a bolo."

CHAPTER X

THE next morning proved calm, so the *Spindrift* was run around to the other side of the island, moored fore and aft, and properly fended from the perpendicular cliffs. It was found that the end of the boom was just about level with the tiny plateau on which stood the marooned cow, so that with the six-foot rise that remained of the tide, a sufficient hoist would be afforded. There only remained to await the completion of flood.

But now a new complication was introduced by Teller. Where were they going to deposit the cow once she was slung clear? Marshall said he had thought they would dump her into the sea and let her swim. Teller had no faith that the cow in her present condition could swim that far, and in such cold water, and with so many currents. The alternative seemed to be to lower her to the deck. Marshall looked a little dashed: the *Spindrift's* spick-and-span ultra-holystoned deck! He took the hurdle nobly, however, and the men set to work to arrange a suitable place on which to deposit her.

At last the great moment was at hand. Dispositions were carefully made. Each was assigned his job and minutely instructed as to just what he was to do. The men on the guy ropes braced themselves; those on the

falls began slowly and cautiously to haul. A lookout at the fore truck reported progress.

"She's afloat!" he shouted, as the cow, hanging back and snorting, began to be forced in spite of braced feet inexorably toward the edge of the cliff. "Her bow's off bottom!" he yelled, as the upward pull lifted her from her forefeet. Over the edge of the cliff, in a cloud of loose earth, the beast came into view.

"Hoist away! Smartly, men!" cried Marshall.

She rose into the air; dangled. The yacht careened slightly as she took the weight so far offside and so high up.

"Hold the falls! Swing her!" shouted Marshall.

The men on the guy ropes swung the boom. High in the air, squirming like a fish and uttering cries either of bovine profanity or of terror, the cow dangled by her horns.

"Oh, the poor thing!" exclaimed Betsy.

"Lower away!" cried Marshall.

The cow descended, swinging to and fro, rocking the yacht from side to side. The men at the falls watched their chance to catch her at centre, lowering rapidly a few feet, then checking the descent. A dozen pairs of hands were outstretched to receive and guide the descending pendulum. For a moment or so there was imminent danger that the animal would either be dashed against the rocky wall or carry away some of the yacht's standing rigging. Then Rogg, reaching up, managed to get hold of a hind leg. This was a mistake. Rogg went overside and splashed into the sea as though he had been projected from a catapult. Somebody threw him a rope and

he scrambled aboard dripping, against a volley of facetious remarks from those who were not too busy.

"Hurt?" snapped Marshall.

"No, sir," replied Rogg, but he stood apart rubbing his shoulder, having had enough of cows for the moment. Some ingenious and more cautious spirit threw the loop of a small line over the beast. By means of it she was guided safely to the deck, where she stood, feet apart, blowing and rolling her eyes. The men cheered.

But the jubilation was cut short by a cry of warning from aloft. The calf was seen to be wabbling back and forth along the edge of the cliff, apparently getting ready to jump down after its parent. The lookout man waved his cap: those on deck shouted and threw up their arms and tossed up rope ends and cut antics in an effort to convince the child that in spite of appearances to the contrary cows cannot fly. Teller fell into the dinghy and began frantically to splash toward a point from which he could scale the cliff. All these manœuvres seemed doomed to failure: the calf had apparently every intention of casting itself into space. Suddenly it froze to immobility, staring fixedly straight out in front of it. All looked aloft in the direction of its gaze. On the foretruck sat Roggsy humped up and gazing with every appearance of a cynical and detached disdain directly into the calf's bulging eyes. For the first time in his history Roggsy was being absolutely quiet at a moment of storm and stress. Calmly he held that calf with his glittering eye while at leisure he looked it over in detail and registered for future reference an unfavourable simian opinion.

Breathless silence fell. If Teller could scale the cliff before the unprecedented spell broke! If the miracle of Roggsy's immobility could only endure a short half minute more! It did! Teller, breathing heavily and perspiring freely, was seen to creep upon the hypnotized calf, to grasp it firmly. Everybody cheered. Two of the sailors clasped each other and pulled off an impromptu dance. Roggsy turned a pair of blinking little eyes contemptuously down toward them.

But the celebration nearly proved fatal. In the excitement the two men at the falls had dropped their rope in order to do a little caper of triumph. This released the pressure on the cow. Whether her finer feelings had been outraged to the point of retaliation or whether she was merely looking for her progeny is obscure. At any rate, she uttered another bellow and took charge of the deck. There was no opposition. Men swarmed up the rigging. Betsy and her brother dove down the hatch. Rogg, caught unaware between wind and water, and with no other place to go, again went overside. But then, he was already wet. Marshall swung himself up on the boom, from which point he gave his view of the situation in no uncertain terms.

The flurry was, of course, momentary. The trailing rope was soon seized and the beast made fast. And at that moment the gentle and plaintive voice of Teller was heard alongside begging for assistance in getting the calf aboard.

Excitement drained away as the sea drains from rocks, leaving the *Spindrift* and her people once more a part of

surroundings instead of a self-contained centre of unholy row. Marshall looked about him. The deck was strewn with ropes and chairs and things. Rigging flapped idly at loose ends. The varnish on the masts and rails was scraped and marred. The *Spindrift* looked like a drunken harridan. Also, the trip down and the excitement had made the cow seasick, and she had proved in this respect to have no gastronomic inhibitions.

"Some job!" cried Marshall, wiping his forehead. "I never expected to be skipper of a cattle ship, but I guess I am." He began to laugh. "I haven't had so much fun in a coon's age," he chuckled to Betsy and her brother. "Now what?"

Teller, in his deprecating way, proffered a suggestion, or rather a request.

"You see," said he, "my gas boat is out of order and I've got to run in a new bearing; and I wouldn't dast to put the cow back on this island again, nohow; she might do the same thing again; and I thought as how it wouldn't be no more trouble for you now if you was to take her over back home again."

Marshall stared at him a moment incredulously; then chuckled.

"All right, old-timer," he agreed, "anything goes. Where is it?"

Teller pointed. The other island was now in plain sight and about four miles distant.

"They's a bight with five fathom on the south side. You can't miss it. They's a good beach and the water's

still, so all you have to do is to drop her overside and let her swim. It's only about a hundred feet, and she can make that. You'll find my partner across the neck. Just tell him I will be along as soon as I get my gas boat fixed up."

"All right," agreed Marshall. "Here, Parker, you row him around to his boat in the dinghy and then come back. We'll wait here."

The dinghy departed.

"Good Lord, I'll be glad to be rid of her!" cried Marshall, with a despairing glance toward the cow, who was now bellowing continuously and with more vigour. "How did we ever get into such a mess! What do you suppose is ailing her now?"

"It's so romantic!" pointed out Betsy. "The rescue of a matron in distress! She's hungry, poor thing. What have we aboard that is fit for cows?" She approached the animal gingerly and held out something in her flattened palm. The cow smelled of it and resumed her awful racket. "She doesn't like green olives," observed Betsy, regretfully throwing the rejected fruit overboard. "I thought there was no harm trying." She stopped as though thunderstruck. "Isn't there some proper thing we have neglected?" she inquired, anxiously. "Oughtn't we to run up the milk-white flag, for instance?"

Plutarch appeared, bearing a large white bowl.

"What have you there?" asked Marshall.

"It's canned green peas, sir," answered Plutarch. "It's all we've got in the stores that we ever used to feed cows when I was in the dairy business."

"How long were you in the dairy business, Plutarch?" inquired Betsy, interestedly.

"Not long, madam; about a year."

"A hundred and sixty-eight," tallied Betsy.

Plutarch approached the rescued matron, holding out his bowl of canned peas. The cow ceased her racket and sniffed. Then she inserted her nose in the bowl. Plutarch looked around in pardonable triumph. The cow apparently tasted and disapproved. Without troubling to remove her muzzle from the bowl she blew violently. Canned peas sprayed upward as from a fountain. Around both Plutarch and the cow was a nimbus of green peas. They scattered over the already disgraceful deck. Plutarch disappeared, spattered and discomfited. The howls of joy from all in sight were drowned by the renewed ululations of the cow.

The Ram was summoned. He suggested canned corn and dried beans and beets. A pail was produced and in it was prepared a marvellous bovine goulash.

"We've got to quiet the beast somehow, or we'll go mad," said Marshall.

"We ought to have a vegetable garden aboard," said Betsy. "It would be very simple: a foot or so of good garden soil in that flat place there just forward of that funny thing-um-a-jig."

The cow accepted the goulash, ate it, drank a pail of water, quieted down, began to lick her calf, which in turn applied itself to its own meal.

Parker and the dinghy returned. Preparations were made for getting under way.

"Two of the men will have to stand by while we're under way," Marshall instructed Denton, "in case there's a swell outside or the confounded beast gets excited."

"The cow watch!" cried Betsy, delighted, "and it comes right before the dog watch; and it's miles ahead of the dog watch because the dog watch hasn't any dog to watch but the cow watch has a real cow to watch!"

The engine took up its rhythm; the moorings were loosed; the *Spindrift* swung slowly to the open. All was well. The cow had now apparently become the gentlest critter in the world, as so repeatedly advertised by her loving owner, and was dreamily chewing a placid cud. The calf was still in search of refreshments.

"Sweet rural scene," murmured Betsy.

But beyond the point the yacht encountered a dead swell which cradled her in long, slow swoops from trough to crest. Thanks to the pen improvised for her by spare spars and canvas the cow had no difficulty in holding her feet, but she stopped chewing her cud and into her eyes came a haunted, querying uneasiness.

"I've seen that expression before. And she's stopped chewing her cud!" cried Betsy. "I believe she's going to 'recudgitate.'"

"The demoralization is complete," groaned X. Anaxagoras, "and I do not refer to the cow."

"Tell Plutarch to bring a basin," suggested one of the crew.

In spite of the imminence of further gastric capacity, the spirit was one of hilarity. Everyone had his little joke. Some of those voiced by the crew out of hearing

of the quarter deck were not entirely decorous, having to do largely with possible safeguards of a no longer immaculate deck. Betsy alone was silent, lost in a brown study. Marshall noticed this most unusual condition and inquired about it.

"I'm composing a poem," she vouchsafed. "I haven't got very far with it. Only the first two lines."

"Let's have them," urged Marshall.

Betsy struck an attitude; her voice became deep and solemn.

"When canned goods take the place of grass and hay
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the sea,"

she declaimed in a stage-elocution voice.

The cove on the other island was found without difficulty, and after an interval of sounding, the *Spindrift* came to anchor within a few hundred feet of a shelving beach. Preparations were made for the landing. The cow presented no difficulties: simply sling her overside, cast off the lines, and let her swim ashore. Teller had informed them that the cow could swim. But how about the calf? Nobody knew. It was a very young calf. Do such animals swim naturally, or do they have to be taught? Birds have to be taught to fly, and flying is their natural mode of progression. Swimming is not a cow's natural mode of progression. Betsy brought up these points and argued them with great ability in face of much scoffing. Finally, more in disgusted yielding to feminine imbecility than from any conviction, Marshall ordered life preservers to be hooked about the body of the little

beast. The calf did not object. He had but one idea in his poor little head, and that was concerned solely with the meals-at-all-hours conception.

"No meals will be served during the landing!" sung out one of the men.

It was finally considered advisable to lead the beasts while in the water. Marshall, X. Anaxagoras, and three men in the long boat undertook this task. The other members of the ship's company lined the rail. When the beach was gained a great cheer went up from everybody save Roggsy and Noah, who undoubtedly considered themselves zoölogically competent for one small yacht, and who therefore had withheld their approval. The men beached the dinghy and disappeared in the small timber and brush, presumably in search of Teller's partner. After a half hour they returned and rowed off. X. Anaxagoras was laughing.

"Did you find him?" asked Betsy, as soon as they had stepped on deck.

"Yes, we found him: across a little narrow peninsula. He was working in a garden. He was a long, lank, solemn individual, and he didn't even look up at us as we approached. Just grunted in answer to our greeting and went right on working. He was planting potatoes, and he had a basket of potato seeds and a sack of starfish. He'd lay a starfish in the hole and put a potato on top of that, and then another starfish, and cover them up with earth. That's a new one on me in the way of fertilizer!"

"Probably planting a milky way for the cow," murmured Betsy. "Go on."

"Finally, Jerry told him his partner's boat was out of commission, so we'd brought back the cow for him, as the cow didn't like the other island. Didn't go into details; and the partner didn't seem enough interested to ask for them.

"'That so?' said he. 'What kind of boat you got?'

"'Pretty good-size boat,' says Jerry.

"'Well, now,' says the old boy, 'that's a piece of luck that don't often happen to me, because I was figuring on how we're going to get the old bull back there—he's getting mighty poor here, and our gas boat is too small. Could you take him back with you?'"

X. Anaxagoras chuckled.

"What did you say?" Betsy asked Marshall.

"Say!" exploded the young man. "I said NO more forcefully than I ever said it in my life!"

He arose and went forward to supervise the work of putting the yacht back into some sort of shape. Soon everybody, Marshall included, was working very hard. X. Anaxagoras remained for a few minutes smoking his pipe. Then he knocked the ashes out and got to his feet.

"I think I'll get busy, too," he remarked to Betsy. "But have you noticed? The adventure has been a success. A shared experience, equally shared. The same kind of work is being done, but now there's a holiday spirit in the air. Catch it? There's a certain blandness in the human brew that has never been there before. And it cannot be lost. It is an acquisition. Perfect service is performed enthusiastically always—and humorously. The perfect human solvent."

He went forward.

CHAPTER XI

IN THE early morning of the next day the *Spindrift* lay as though upheld by a medium only a little more dense than the still atmosphere. It was utterly calm. So translucent was the water, so enchantedly still the reflections of its surface, that the yacht itself had perforce an unwonted quality of lightness, of insubstantiality. Otherwise, how could it float suspended in a medium so tenuous and ethereal that it seemed as though a feather from a gull's wing could be wafted in and through it at the will of any vagrant breeze?

The three stepped on deck into the broad, spreading beauty of the morning and stood silent, looking about them and breathing deep, caught, too, in the spell. They, too, were as though suspended in its lucence. The decks and the appurtenances of the craft were small; little more than a foothold; no barrier to the sweep of shadow-banked waters and eternity-connecting skies. Tender-tinted clouds rode from world to world. In the morning radiance was a magic and an absolution from the hard demands of the practical, a hovering secret of eternity. The newly warmed and freshened air seemed to bathe their bodies directly with an essence superior to the insulation of clothes. They stood at the entrance to the companionway. They were as though listening.

The whole world seemed caught in the magic which a breath or a sudden movement or a loud noise might destroy. Yet, fragile as it was, certain privileged characters appeared to be able, by especial kinship, to carry on their affairs—which involved a certain amount of noise or motion—without interference with these gods of stillness. Tiny alert dabchicks swam about two by two, cocking their heads now one side, now the other, in order to bring to bear in turn their friendly bright eyes. They flirted their absurd little tails and shrugged their wings. Then, all at once, they flipped up behind and disappeared beneath the water, leaving only slowly widening rings as though from the rising of a trout. And shortly the still surface would burst into a silver outflung fountain of tiny fishlets spraying upward and outward from a common centre, propelled upward from below by the dynamics of a dabchick getting his breakfast. Shortly, the little brown bird would pop up again, and its mate, and they would go on swimming slowly and idly with a bright and friendly eye on the yacht. And a little more cautiously distant swam a flock of slender, trim, aristocratic grebes, neat in their well-groomed black and white clothes, quick and alert in movement, their slim necks curved in nervous question marks. Interrogatory Birds was Betsy's name for them. When they dived they did so neatly, without a splash, with hardly a ripple, so that the water almost instantly became glassy again. Thus they gave the appearance of appearing and vanishing: part of the magic. Or the clear still mirror was broken by the dart-shaped water of an eel swimming near the surface. They three

lived superb moments, with wings of the morning on their shoulders. They said no word to one another, but they had drawn together in a close kinship of the spirit. The new day was fluttering down and magnetizing them and tuning them in harmony with great harmonies. The life within them became clear and undetailed and expanded to far horizons.

CHAPTER XII

AFTER the episode of the spotty cow, the *Spindrift* continued to work her way slowly north. X. Anaxagoras directed her different destinations, and the length of the days' journeyings. His knowledge of the coast was detailed as to lost little coves, and the location of trout and salmon, and the run of tides, so this seemed only natural. If he had any plan or method in his wanderings, he did not disclose it; but at times it seemed to Betsy that in some obscure fashion he was searching for something. It was only a passing thought and she did not voice it. Marshall seemed to enjoy himself thoroughly and very actively. He took the greatest interest in all possibilities, trying out all the trout streams, searching down the rumours of hidden lakes, trolling for salmon, exploring the back country for bear. It was the wrong time of year to shoot the latter, but he liked to establish the fact of their presence and to mark them on the chart and to make full notes of the hunting possibilities in the log. Indeed, he had much the same spirit in regard to other matters of which he seemed keenly in pursuit. He would make heartbreaking journeys through the thick undergrowth and in the rough country, following up streams in search of possible lakes. Then he would spend days cutting through a trail. The trail completed, he

would labour mightily carrying up a canoe. After all this was accomplished, he would often catch one or two trout only and move on. He was satisfied: he had established the fact that it was a new "fishing lake." The catching of the fish was unimportant. Usually he had some of the crew with him to help, but he liked to do most of the hard work himself. He would return late and very hungry, and full of adventures. The yacht received only a necessary amount of attention. Rogg conscientiously hoisted the absent pennant when Marshall went ashore; but Marshall no longer noticed whether it was done or not.

Sometimes X. Anaxagoras accompanied these expeditions. More often he did not, but remained aboard absorbed in reading or writing or contemplating the universe. Betsy would occasionally follow out the new trail, but she, too, seemed to be able to occupy herself with her own affairs. Between herself and her brother was much companionable silence. They were most often together when Betsy went swimming. X. Anaxagoras would then scull her to the indicated rock or cove or indentation where he would sit smoking his pipe while she bathed. Only rarely did he join her in the water.

"Too cold," he answered her repeated urgings. "I don't know why it is, but women stand cold water better than men. I like to pop in and out well enough—occasionally—but I can't stay in for ever the way you do. It's agin nature."

Betsy loved to swim lazily to and fro, to float luxuriously, to lie supported by the embracing element. She was doing so now, talking upward to her brother, perched

on a rock holding the painter of the dinghy in his hand.

"I wish you could feel it, could be part of it," she said. "You can't get it just scrambling in and out. There's a sort of—well, a sort of bosoming comfort in being in the water. It's fun to lie on your back in its embrace. You are only really conscious of it when you move. It so perfectly surrounds and accepts and sports with me. And then, when I get enough of that, I love just to tear it up for the fun of seeing it mend itself. It does it so lightly, so derisively, laughing its bubbles at the futility of my efforts. And when I swim slowly, the way I like to do it, I feel as though I were stroking the water, and it responds again with that nice feeling of soft encompassing. Sounds foolish, doesn't it?"

"Not at all," replied X. Anaxagoras.

She paddled lazily to the rock and slid out of the water like a seal.

"The sun is nice, too," said she. "He is very commanding. He's not at all playful. Of course, there are the trees, and the dust motes, and the little flexible people like that who know how to shift and tease and make sport of his great serious directness; but I can't do it. All I can do is to be subordinate and without resistance give up to his expansion." She stretched her arms lazily above her head as though in invocation, "Don't you feel it? The magic that dissolves away clothes and flesh and enters into your bones? And I dissolve, too, until I am all atoms and chemistry. I'm separated and spread out. By and by, I begin to radiate. *That* sounds foolish!"

"I do not think so," said X. Anaxagoras.

"And then there's the air." She breathed deep and exhaled sharply. "It's fun associating with the air, too. It has so many tricks of giving precedence."

"Giving precedence?" repeated the Healer of Souls.

"Yes, giving precedence to little things over big things. Dimensions. Favour-giving dimensions. It juggles them. It takes a fine big gallant fir tree and tricks it utterly. It makes it overtop a whole big blue range of mountains with chasms and abysses and mists and unmeasurablenesses in which the poor fir tree would be quite lost. But it makes them do obeisance to this monarch of fictitious size. It amuses itself with time and space. And you can play with air and do its tricks, too. You can do them quite nicely with a pair of glasses."

"I see," said X. Anaxagoras.

"I can even get into the confidence of the rain that pricks out the water when it's still. It's fun to drift across with it slowly to the woods and help it lay on them its life-giving weight that they always droop under. Have you noticed how they droop?"

"I've noticed."

"I've nice big playthings," she said, contentedly. "That's why I love it so, I suppose."

"I've been wondering lately whether so long a spell of this sort of life did not bore you," he remarked.

She turned to look at him, wide-eyed.

"Bore me! Never! How could it?" She sat up straight. "Yes, I know: I ought to be running an orphan asylum or educating people in the slums or having a job, but——"

"You have a job, little sister," interrupted X. Anaxagoras, gently. "It's a very big job, and I think you are filling it very completely. It isn't everybody who is big enough to be permitted to have that job."

She knit her brows. "What is it?"

"Just living," said X. Anaxagoras, "—as you do it!"

CHAPTER XIII

LIKE a falcon that has been questing almost aimlessly, now in one direction, now in another, but at last catches sight of its quarry, the *Spindrift* suddenly ceased her short, idle wanderings and shot straight for the north. X. Anaxagoras it was who directed this; X. Anaxagoras set her course; X. Anaxagoras took charge of the necessary direction as to watches and the necessary arrangement for day and night sailing. He did this in the manner of speaking with deference to Marshall's permission, but he more or less assumed that permission. Nor would he define his objective.

"The appropriate interim has elapsed," he stated. "It is now time to seek further adventure."

Where? they asked him. He professed himself unable to say. Adventure was to be had, that was all he knew; but it was only to be had by those who go forth to seek it with adventure in their hearts.

The three were seated in the cabin, the lights going, while the *Spindrift* stood easily into a long roll from the northwest. X. Anaxagoras knocked the ashes from his pipe and laid it aside.

"You can't expect me to sit with a pipe in my mouth for ever," said he. "I think on the whole I've done pretty well to keep it there so long. Adventure, happiness, live

living—synonymous and interchangeable terms. People seem to think they just happen to a man. They don't. They are not gratuitous, beggable from life. They don't drift to you the way people expect them to. They must be met; and they must be met with something, some little germ at least, of the same quality in yourselves. Otherwise, how can you know them when you see them? It is only like that recognizes like."

"But that doesn't explain where you're heading for or what you expect to find there," Marshall pointed out.

"That is unimportant," stated X. Anaxagoras.

"Then why strike out all of a sudden this way?"

"It's the vigorous gesture. It symbolizes the desire, the living desire that must attract. It is the decisive effort that indicates a liveness and an eagerness and a willingness to search. It's the doing something aroused that must bring response. Adventure, happiness, live living! They are the composable things, like music. They are free, they are everywhere. All you have to do is to help yourself."

"Why not stay home, then?" asked Marshall, sensibly.

"Why not, indeed, if no one knew how? But people don't know how. They cannot make the necessary excursion of the spirit without a corresponding excursion of the body. So you go to the South Seas, and the effort arouses the spark of adventure in you, and adventure itself answers to its call! Adventure, life, happiness have no fixed and definite habitation where they can be encountered as one encounters a shopkeeper in his shop. Their abode is in the searching. They lie in almost any ash can by kit-

chen doors, and people throw them away because they do not understand the magic of transmuting them. We are all of us tiresome in that respect, but it is hard to keep patient with the average happiness perceptions of men. Puritanical, prudish, penurial——"

"Look out! you'll run out of p's!" warned Betsy.

"Stodgy stoics immune to imagination's magic! Everything within them is dwarfed and contracted and dissociated when the intelligence and technique of happiness and life and adventure should be blooming! What molishness! Adventure! All they do is to take drab-coloured steps through gray episodes. Think they're humdrum and unhappy and commonplace because they can't get away! Pooh! Pooh!"

"Sic 'em, Sid!" laughed Betsy.

X. Anaxagoras grinned and reached for his pipe. "True, just the same," he insisted.

"By how many miles north do you estimate our own prudish, puritanical, and penurious stodgy stoicism is to be measured?" inquired Betsy, sweetly.

X. Anaxagoras laughed.

"Good hit!" he cried. "We are all poor weak creatures unable to meet a counsel of perfection! But whatever and whenever it is, it is waiting, and we'll meet it as sure as shooting, and we'll know it if we have its reflection in our hearts."

With that masterly evasion he abruptly went on deck.

All of one night and the succeeding day, and the following night, the *Spindrift* held north under a breeze that just permitted her a started sheet on the port tack. The watches succeeded each other with accustomed regularity.

X. Anaxagoras took his turn at command, so now each twelve hours was divided among three. It happened to fall that on the second night of the run the first morning watch came to him, so that the others received their first intimation of an arrival from the flopping of the sails as the yacht rounded into the wind and the hoarse rattle of chains as the anchor let go. It was still very early in the morning. Betsy raised herself to look out of her porthole. She reported to Marshall the glimpse of a curved shore and a snow mountain. The voice of the Healer of Souls was heard outside the stateroom door.

"All snug," he called. "Pretty early. Better get another nap. I'm going to turn in for a while."

"Where are we?" asked Marshall.

"Don't know it's name, but it looks like a good place."

"Good place for what?" commented Marshall, sleepily sinking back on his pillow.

The peaceful lap-lapping of tiny waves against the yacht's side alone answered him.

Two hours later they came on deck. Around them curved the points of a narrow bay with wide projecting, protecting arms. Dense forest came close to the water's edge, save along one considerable stretch, and rose behind in a series of wooded hills that culminated in a rugged black range of mountains capped with white. This forest was again broken by one of those long nearly perpendicular alley-like gashes, peculiar to this country, extending nearly to the top of the mountain and marking the path of the avalanche. The débris from it, jumbled and jagged, but already partly overgrown, lay like a low wall dividing the cleared area

from the woods beyond. Immediately in the foreground was what looked like an old clearing. The firs and cedars lacked, but their places had been taken by a dense growth of willows and aspens and vines and nettles.

"Looks like one of those miserable old abandoned attempts at farming an impossible country," observed Marshall. "Why *do* they do it!"

But from X. Anaxagoras, when he appeared for breakfast, they obtained little satisfaction. He was in one of his puckish moods.

"Looks like a good place," he repeated. "After breakfast we'll go ashore and explore. It looks to me as though it might be the haunt of the Great Northern Gollywog. That would be interesting, wouldn't it? There are none in captivity. The Great Northern Gollywog," he explained, expansively, as he buttered himself some toast, "is distinguished from all others first of all by its prehensile ears and its habit of invisibility."

They gave him up in disgust.

After breakfast the three, accoutred for tramping, went ashore. They picked their path gingerly through the nettles and other growth, and with considerable difficulty forced a way to the top of the wall-like rock slide from the mountain.

"It's easier going as soon as we cross that," panted X. Anaxagoras, stopping to get his wind and indicating a hundred yards or so of old clearing that yet intervened. "We'll follow up the stream."

Shortly they reached the point at which it emerged from the timber. The heat and dryness of the old clearing fell

away. The water was clear and white on the granite; little green stringers of grass and flowers bordered the stream, and a fringe of salmonberries masked the woods. Through these they passed and found themselves in the forest.

It was a cool and mossy and shady forest, with a softness of feel and contour to be found only in this rain-drenched northland. Fallen trees did not long retain their stark and solid nakedness here. They softened quickly with decay, and veiled their outlines with upspringing velvet growths. And the shadows were still and blurred and seemed to settle slowly down from above in a precipitation of mossy covering for every tiniest twig and stone and earth bit of the forest floor. They did not twinkle and dance as do shadows in other forests, but weaved slowly and gracefully like the shadows of kelp on the sea floor. And in the air was a chill coolness like the coolness of water. One might play mermaid in these forests, so deep are they in mysterious, cool, lucid greenness held in suspense and only revealed by passing shifting shafts of yellow from a world above. But this was no place one might linger in safety. A warm-blooded creature must pass on, pausing only briefly, or the enchantment might be laid upon him, the green chill might claim him for an aquarium life.

They pushed on silently and so came out again to the stream, and a sunny stringer of coarse tufts of warmed grasses, and a buzziness, and a cheerful song sparrow. Here they paused to shake off the chill and to bask under the life-giving sun. There were blackberries here; and wild strawberries for the hunting. The stream itself was quiet and

friendly, no big shoutings and turmoils of struggle; only quaint, tiny water trials, bits of fall, and triumphs of clean open spaces, and a miniature struggle through brush or reed. Grasshoppers were here, and bumble bees rich and portly, and long-legged water bugs skating atop the stream—all of a nice little humdrum intimate life. It was a good place to rest awhile and warm up; and they did so, then pushed on, following the creek bed.

The stream emerged from a ravine. Here were the measures of its need for pause and rest. Here were the big shoutings and turmoils, the struggle and the conflict. The ravine was the scene of battle. There the big trees had hurled themselves recklessly, starkly, wildly, striving to hold back the force that eats at their roots, snaggily and futilely attempting to dam back this power that nevertheless overcame them and whitened their bones. The going was hard here. Rocks were slippery, log jams like jackstraws, pools and cataracts and rapids deep and treacherous and swift. It was a case of scramble where they could, with always an apparent impasse just ahead. Nevertheless, X. Anaxagoras led on confidently, and at last they emerged.

Below them, down a gentle fir-clad slope, lay a sun-cupped lake starred with warm-rocked islands, each lying peaceful above its perfect reflection, content in its little continentship, bearing sufficingly its bit of grass or shrub or stunted tree. Here was a still spirit of utter peace and calm and remoteness where, one felt, time must have folded its wings, where in all the years of all the centuries the only happenings would be the gossip of riffling breezes or the rare deliberate splash of a fish grown large in the importance of his iso-

lation. They descended to its level, and sat on a windfall. The reflected mountains, which had spread themselves widely, seemed to withdraw, to contract in order to make them room.

The surface of the water was absolutely still. Its mirror was clear and polished, but above it was the faint, wavering, milky blur of clouds of tiny flies. And singly or in honeymooning couples cruised the big blue dragon flies.

Near the opposite shore floated in the black polish of the half shadow the two resident loons. They drifted, making no discernible motion, but evidently they had caught sight of the intruders, for presently one of them lifted up its voice in a long demoniac peal of derisive laughter. The hills laughed back in an echo of agreement.

"There always seem to be just two on each lake," observed Betsy. "I wonder where the young ones of each year go to? It must be quite a responsibility to parent loons to have to find new unoccupied lakes to settle the children in. Or does the young gentleman loon have to find himself a proper lake before he can suggest matrimony?"

The loon laughed again. He was not telling.

CHAPTER XIV

AFTER a short rest in enjoyment they retraced their steps. When once more they had passed through the lower forest and had climbed the long ridge of talus that was the débris of the avalanche, X. Anaxagoras stopped, seated himself on a rock, and lighted his pipe.

"Like it?" he asked.

"It's the most beautiful walk we've had yet," asserted Betsy, fervently.

"It is more than that," said the Healer of Souls, quietly. "It is at once the most beautiful and valuable monument to a great love."

"There's a story!" cried Betsy, settling herself ecstatically to listen.

"Yes, there's a story. You have probably looked on all this," he waved his hand toward the shore, "as a busted farm, one of the numberless failures of its sort scattered all along the coast. It is not a busted farm; on the contrary, it is or might be a very rich mine indeed, nobody could tell how rich, but it is possibly worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. It and the country we have been through in large part is owned by a woman who, if not exactly living in poverty, may at best be said to be living in very reduced circumstances. By saying the word she could become wealthy. She does not say the word."

"Why?" asked Betsy and Marshall together.

"Because this is her monument to the man she loved and it is sacred to her."

He puffed at his pipe a moment and then went on.

"I knew them many years ago," said he. "No, you did not know them, Betsy; it was before you came West. They were young and beautiful and radiant. I used to think I had never seen two people in whom shone more glowingly the most beautiful outward-reaching spirit of youth and ardent eagerness and trust in life. Whenever I got rather pessimistic about the human race—I did get pessimistic in those days," he interpolated with a faint and detached humorous intonation—"I used to think of those two, and so possessed myself of a prototype of what might be. He was a mining engineer, and they possessed nothing much but themselves, which was amply sufficient. To be sure, they had at times literally not enough to eat, but that didn't particularly matter. She did her own cooking and scrubbing and mending and laundering, but she did them graciously and not as one who stoops. I thought them very lucky people, children of fortune." He smiled whimsically. "In that opinion," he added, drily, "I belonged to a select minority of one. The man went into one thing after another, and each of his ventures not only failed, but bequeathed him debts which he seemed to consider himself honour bound to discharge. He was ill for a long and expensive period. A child came. The thing seemed to be quite complete, as near as any outsider could judge. As a matter of fact, it was not only not complete, but it hadn't even made a start. You see, they retained

all their valuable possessions, quite intact. Finally, as the young man's calling failed him, he became a prospector—just a common prospector with flour and bacon and coffee and sugar and an ax and a pick and shovel and a ragged shirt or so. He worked his way up this coast. The woman and child came with him. They shared their hardships—real hardships. If it hadn't been that someone grubstaked them from time to time, the game might have become quite impossible. I don't know, though; when one has rich possessions no game ever becomes quite impossible."

"Sid! You did it!" interposed Betsy, swiftly.

X. Anaxagoras paid no attention whatever to this remark.

"At last he hit it," he continued. "I don't know very much about mines, but I know enough to realize that this was a very peculiar sort of proposition. Perhaps nobody but this particular man would have had the vision or the steadfastness. I shall have to tell you a little about it so you can understand it.

"You see this is not really a gold country. That is to say, the formation hereabouts and the character of the rock are not favourable to gold. This man found some float high up on the mountain and painstakingly followed it down, bit by bit. Float," he told Betsy, "is isolated pieces of appropriate rock lying on top of the ground. It is supposed to mark the route taken from the original ledge by the gold-bearing stratum. It has been broken off in times past and been carried slowly down the mountain-side. Usually the prospector finds it far down and follows it *up* until he comes to the ledge from which it originated. Then there's his mine. That's the usual way.

"But this man reversed the process. The ledge from which it had come was only a low-grade remnant. Some of the float, however, was pretty good. He figured, therefore, that the real value of the original ledge had been disintegrated and carried down the mountain in that creek we went up this morning, or, rather, its gigantic primitive ancestor. Little by little, by disintegration and because of the fact that gold is heavy, it should have been separated and sunk to the bottom to rest on the smooth bedrock. If the bedrock were all a smooth apron it would, of course, wash out into the sea—there's gold in sea water, as perhaps you know. But if there were holes or cups in the bedrock, then the gold would settle in them and accumulate. That's the way placer gold comes into existence. Understand?"

"My feeble intellect manages to follow you so far, Sid dear," Betsy reassured him sweetly. "Pray go on. Perhaps my well-known feminine intuition may be able to fill the gaps when your narrative becomes more difficult."

"The man found enough in the small pockets he encountered in the course of the stream to convince him that there had originally been a great deal of gold in that high-up ledge. But a little above where we now sit it became evident that the primeval stream that had carried it down had fallen over a ledge in a waterfall. This the disappearance of the bedrock indicated, although long since the country had filled up level, as you now see it, and the stream—or its successor—flowed without hindrance to the sea. The man argued to himself that if this were true, then below the old waterfall there might very well have been hollowed out a basin of considerable size——"

"In which would be accumulated all the gold!" cried Betsy, sitting up excitedly.

"Correct. By sinking a shaft straight down he could reach it. All this he did single-handed. In the meantime, the little family lived down there"—he waved his hand toward the clearing—"mainly on hope, but with some slight assistance from a vegetable garden, a young orchard, a few chickens, and such things. You see, the man had to clear land and make a farm as a side issue. It was hard work. He could not borrow on as uncertain a prospect as he possessed—at least, not at first. Finally, he managed to borrow a little and could give more time to sinking his shaft. That was slow business, too, for one man. It proved to be a very deep shaft. The man had to timber it, and make long ladders, and hoist out all the débris with a hand winch. It got to be very hard work indeed when he had dug and blasted below a certain depth, but that only encouraged him. You see, the higher the old waterfall had been, the more certainty of a basin at its foot, and the larger the basin would be. It took faith as well as work. The man supplied much of both, but the woman did her share; believe me, she did her share!"

X. Anaxagoras paused as his mind swept clear the willows and vines and nettles and reëstablished an old scene that had gone.

"The basin was even richer than he thought it was going to be," he continued at length. "Sometimes," he observed, parenthetically, "these pockets are very rich indeed. Near Custer City in the Black Hills I saw a miner's 'bucket' come up carrying more than five thousand dollars. The

man began to take out almost pure metal. I believe in a few days he took out enough to pay off his borrowings and a little more. Then this thing we're sitting on slid down off the mountain." X. Anaxagoras stared contemplatively up the wide gash which marked the path of the avalanche. "There are, as you see, a considerable number of tons of it." He paused and knocked out his pipe. "The man," he said, quietly, "was in its way. He lies under it now.

"I know of only one other monument as beautiful as the one I have shown you to-day," went on X. Anaxagoras, after a moment. "I refer to the Taj Mahal." He puffed at his pipe thoughtfully. "It is only fair to say," he concluded, "that this preservation intact, this dedication not only of a wonderful and still and age-old beauty, of this treasure house of untold wealth, is more instinctive than considered. It is none the less real. The woman conceived a great horror of it all. She fled from it to save her reason and has tried to shut it out from her life. She will not have it mentioned to her. Its value means nothing to her in comparison with a self-preserving recoil that would erase it from the world of her consciousness. I suppose the modern psychologist would call it a complex. It is a very deep-seated one. There you are!"

"It is a very touching story," said Marshall, "but somehow it seems an awful waste. A fortune here—and idle——"

"The fortune has always been here," said X. Anaxagoras, dryly, "and I don't know that the world actually needs more gold."

He arose and led the way into the thick and screening

undergrowth. Instead of following the path they had made coming up, he bore more to the right, breaking somewhat painfully a new path. After a time they came to the remains of a split picket fence enclosing a dooryard. The house within it was a small affair built of poles. It had, however, rather more commodious windows than is usual in such structures, and had been graced by a veranda whose rails were built in rustic patterns. Two short sections of logs had been set on end either side the steps and hollowed to form bowl-like receptacles for earth. In them, evidently, at one time had been planted ferns or flowers; but now they were choked with weeds and nettles, as indeed was the whole dooryard. Nevertheless, here and there, half hidden, half crowded aside, showed a bloom of sweet William, of foxglove, of poppy—survivors scattered and dispersed from their original tended beds, keeping barely alive an old tradition of care. The young firs and cedars were already springing up, crowding the forest in; three or four unkempt apple trees struggled to retain a place among them.

X. Anaxagoras slipped through a gap in the palings. The others followed him to the sagging, decrepit veranda and looked through the windows to the interior.

"She fled from the catastrophe almost without a word, nor with a backward look," said he. "They had a small gas boat. She navigated it, with the child, all alone. Fortunately, the man had sent out the gold he had already procured. His first thought, before going on with it, was to pay his debt. I don't believe she would have touched it. See, there are garments hanging, and a book open on the table—I have often wondered what it is and what the

message of its open page. Time has dealt gently here. I remind myself that the door is locked and the windows tight and that in the immense toil of his labour the man found time to build well. See: he rounded the end of the shakes below the windows into a sort of pattern. Nothing much, but it took time for a very tired man. But in spite of that common-sense view of it, I still think time has here been compassionate and has touched lightly."

He gently turned the knob of the door, but exerted no pressure.

"Still locked and tight," said he, " and all along the coast, as you know, you will find other cabins like this, and all looted to the bone. Why not? It is a far, harsh country, and when a man needs a door or a window or a gear wheel or a stove that is no longer useful to someone else, he takes it with a free conscience. The abandonment was definite, instantaneous, complete. It was like the flight of a routed army. The woman was mad to get away, to put the horror behind her."

He stretched out his hand and raised a tiny square of oilcloth that hung like a flap on the upper part of the door. A piece of paper was disclosed on which was writing done in ink. The ink was faded, the words almost illegible; but they could still be deciphered. "Please do not break in," it read. "This house is the property of a poor woman who has lost all she had."

"Some compassionate soul," said X. Anaxagoras, "someone who knew of their struggle but not of their final success, someone who understood and who here left his understanding on this bit of paper so that its very simplicity has pro-

tected it as though by an armed guard. I do not doubt," said he, "that men have warmed themselves by driftwood to whom that stove there would have given much comfort."

"I suppose," observed Marshall, "that the whole country was staked out in claims after that. Did they find anything more?"

"No. As far as I know, no one knew of it, or ever heard of it, except myself."

"Where is the woman now?" asked Betsy.

"She is in San Francisco, I believe. She has a little income from what was saved, but she works in an office as a stenographer and is reasonably comfortable and fairly contented. She educates the child."

"I should think she'd see that, for the sake of the child——" began Marshall.

"She sees nothing. There her mind is closed."

"Some day——"

"Yes, that's it: some day," said X. Anaxagoras, cheerfully. "One can but await the turn of the wheel."

CHAPTER XV

THEY returned, thoughtful and silent, to the shore where the boat awaited them. The two men in charge jumped up from the shade of the brush where they had been lying and ran her into the water. No one had anything to say. Betsy and Marshall ruminated over the story they had just heard, and X. Anaxagoras was lost in thought. Finally, Marshall aroused himself as though with an effort.

"Where next, Sid?" he asked. "If it's all the same to you, I wouldn't mind hitting a post office soon. I have some letters to mail that I don't want to get *too* stale."

Before his brother-in-law could answer, one of the sailors spoke up.

"There's a cannery or something around the next point, sir," he suggested. "They'd be sending out mail from time to time."

X. Anaxagoras sat up as though electrified.

"What's that you say? Where?"

"Around that point, there," the sailor affirmed, indicating by a motion of his head.

"Are you sure?"

"Well, I thought it might be a cannery, but of course I don't know. There's some buildings, anyway; and I saw smoke coming out of them."

"How could you see that? There's nothing but a blind passage there, and you can't see that until you're fairly atop it."

"While we were waiting I clumb that ridge, there, sir," explained the man, "and I could see over into the cove."

"Buildings, you say? Many?"

"Well, there's three or four, anyway. I didn't pay much attention."

"I'm glad to know of it," said X. Anaxagoras, after a brief pause. "We'll drop around there after lunch, Jerry, and see if we can mail your letters."

Nothing more was said until they had reached the deck. Then both Betsy and Marshall asked eager questions. X. Anaxagoras shook his head.

"I know nothing about it," he disclaimed. "It's something new; probably a cannery, as Perkins surmises. Must be a cannery. There's good water in there, and a safe harbour, but they certainly picked a hard place to get in. You say you draw ten feet, Jerry?"

"Ten feet four through the bulb on the fin."

"I can take her in at high tide," said X. Anaxagoras, "but it'll be close work and smart work."

"Why not just go around in the kicker?" suggested Marshall. "It can't be very far."

"Oh, let's go in. If it's a cannery, there'll be water in a hose. We can water up. Let's take a look at them."

After lunch proved that X. Anaxagoras had not exaggerated when he described the place as hard to get in. Under reduced throttle the *Spindrift* twisted and turned

and doubled, avoiding sunken reefs and boulders, worming her way through the intricacies of a double channel. The chart was here of no help. It showed merely one of those complicated wriggles in the coast line by which the cartographer conceals his ignorance but gratifies his artistic proclivities untrammelled by facts. At length, however, she pushed her graceful bows past the last fir-clad point to emerge into a long, narrow, lagoon-like body of water, apparently completely enclosed by land.

"All right: let go!" commanded X. Anaxagoras, with a sigh of relief. The anchor slid into the water with a rattling of the chain.

The "cannery" proved to be no cannery, though the sailor had been right in describing the place as inhabited. Two large log structures occupied the immediate foreground. To the right of them, and slightly withdrawn, were two smaller houses. The latter were neatly and tastefully constructed. One of them possessed a wide veranda and gave evidence of some attempt at civilized comfort. From one of the larger buildings smoke issued. No one was in sight, except that on the veranda of the smaller building two figures could be discerned staring intently in their direction.

"A short fat man and a tall lean man," reported X. Anaxagoras, who had possession of the glasses.

"Logging camp?" inquired Marshall, puzzled.

"Mine," said X. Anaxagoras, briefly. "If you look up beyond that big cedar, you'll see their dump."

He took the glasses from his eyes and remained for a moment in deep thought. Then he drew Betsy and Mar-

shall to one side. "If you will be so good as to let me take command here for a little," he said, crisply. "And if you will please do just as I say, without question."

"Certainly," agreed Marshall, promptly, impressed by the other's unwonted seriousness. "But why? What is it?"

"I don't know," said X. Anaxagoras. "I want to find out. In the first place, I don't want any of the men to go ashore until I give the word. Nobody. Understand?"

"All right. But what——"

"In the second place, in case anybody comes off to the yacht I don't want any of them to talk. Have them say simply the truth, that you are cruising around the world. Let them give your name but not mine."

"They don't know your name," Marshall pointed out. "It's X. Anaxagoras to them."

The latter laughed.

"True!" he cried. "That helps! Perhaps, on second thought, you don't need to tell them not to talk. Let 'em tell the truth, as far as they know it."

"But what's the point, Sid? What's wrong?"

"I don't know, I tell you." He smiled at them, his seriousness dropping from him and his old whimsicality taking its place. "Not a thing wrong that I can tell you. But my psychic sense is hitting on all four and you must do as I say."

"Good, O chief! And then?"

"Yachting cap with insignia for you, Jerry," he said, briskly. "Blue coat with brass buttons; white ducks, white shoes. White things for you, Betsy. And the pearls!

On no account forget the pearls. Sunshade also, if you've such a thing aboard."

"They're all packed away!" she protested, "and it's such a bother! Just to go see a lot of old miners——"

"I want you to dress a part," insisted X. Anaxagoras, "and, what's more, I want you to act a part. The lines are not written, but you're both clever little dears, and you can improvise very nicely, I'm sure. Only don't step out of the parts, please."

"But what parts?" cried Betsy, exasperatedly. "I do wish——"

"Model yourselves upon me, children. I shall play the lead. You have not my na ural qualifications for the rôle, I'll admit, but do your best."

"But what rôle? You are so trying. At least give us a hint!"

"The yachting and utter damn fool," X. Anaxagoras told her, blandly. "You know how Willy-off-the-yacht ought to act. Go to it, and be breezy and boneheaded. I want some information we can only get if they think we can't understand it. And if you allow a glimmer of sense to bely your get-up I'll brain you. On the job now! To the dressing room!"

Had he known it, at least a verbal groundwork had been already established by one of the two men on the distant veranda. The lean man spat forth a cigar he had chewed half in two.

"What the *devil!*" he snarled, to his red and moon-faced companion. "How the *hell* did that boat get in here! What did that parcel of damn fools want to nose in here for!"

CHAPTER XVI

THEY went overside into the small boat, dressed in accordance with the instructions of X. Anaxagoras. Betsy had dug up a flaming red parasol, and had improved on the idea by using an inordinate amount of powder and lipstick, and she had already slipped on the manner she considered appropriate to the part, to the ill-concealed interest and astonishment of the men who were to row them ashore, and who knew her well in her ordinary phases. She teetered, and stepped gingerly, and demanded the masculine hand of assistance, and caught her balance with little cries. Marshall and the Healer of Souls were in appropriate rig, but had not yet considered it necessary to begin acting.

"Have the men do their stuff!" hissed X. Anaxagoras, as they took their seats.

Marshall looked his inquiry.

"Oars up, and absence flag, and all that tommy-rot."

Marshall stood up and issued rapid orders. Fortunately, old habit and discipline counted, so that the formalities went off well, for of late they had been much in abeyance. Once seated in the stern sheets the trio looked each other over.

"In this disguise, who would know him!" murmured Betsy, gazing with admiration upon her immaculate

husband. "Look a little blanker, Jerry darling—only a little, that will be enough. I don't know about you, though, Sid. You're not handsome enough to disguise your intelligence. Hard to dim those piercing eyes, hard to subdue that look of native intelligence."

X. Anaxagoras turned partly away from them, did something, then faced them again. His back was toward the men. Gone were his comfortable shell-rimmed glasses. Clasped tightly in his eye socket was a monocle.

The sight shook Betsy from her mincing calm.

"Sid!" she cried, "where in the world—— I didn't know you owned such a thing! Do you have to keep your mouth open to see through the thing?" She went off into a shriek of laughter.

"Hush!" warned Marshall, nervously.

"Let her burble," said X. Anaxagoras, beaming on them chuckle-headedly. "Even to a critical ear her mirth has the reverberation of an empty brain. It will add to the effect."

"Well-known peal of silvery laughter," added Betsy, surreptitiously wiping her eyes. "But it's unfair to spring that thing suddenly, without warning, like this."

"Attention!" commanded X. Anaxagoras, in a low voice, as the prow grated on the pebbles.

The fat man met them as they landed. It would be impossible to write of this fat man without being accused of caricature for the very simple reason that he was a caricature in the flesh. A large fat man is imposing and to be looked upon with awe; a small fat man is chubby and to be looked upon with affection. This was a small fat

man, not more than five feet tall, but he was not chubby. His shape was that of a peanut kernel, the oval running in a smooth outward curve to the equator and then in a smooth inward curve to his small feet. His head also was ovoid rather than circular, the small end of the egg being uppermost. He was rather a compact fat man in that he looked as though he did himself very well indeed, but had not run to flabbiness in the process. He was dressed very neatly in dark blue, with a light blue silk shirt, and a belt with a silver buckle smoothly defining his meridian. In manner he was large and jovial with a gauge pressure of about a hundred and sixty.

"Well! well! well!" he roared at them, heartily. "Welcome to our city! This is a sight for sore eyes! Come right ashore! How are you! Glad to see you!"

He helped the teetering Betsy gallantly over the bow and clasped the men successively in a huge grip as they stepped ashore.

"I was saying only this morning to my partner," he continued to boom on, "that we had everything heart could desire here—a fine climate, a beautiful outlook, the beauties of God's nature all about us, all the creature comforts, far from the madding crowd, but that there was one thing lacking, and that was the sight of new faces, the sound of new voices, and above all the presence of lovely woman to make our Paradise complete. And here you are to do that very little thing! My name's Barker." He paused in expectation.

"This is Mr. and Mrs. Marshall," X. Anaxagoras interposed quickly, "and I am Tomlinson."

"Pleased to meet you," Barker completed these amenities. "Come up to the house and meet my partner"—he winked at them heavily—"and help us bust the Eighteenth Amendment. Some of the best!"

"Charmed, I'm sure," murmured Marshall, in his best society manner.

Being utter damn fools had to be conveyed through personal appearance solely, for they had no chance to say anything. Barker boomed on without intermission as he led the way. His whole portly being radiated cordiality, hospitality. He told jokes, rather feeble in themselves, but given power by his hearty laugh. His face was a living expression of joviality. With difficulty, the others saw him as he was. Irresistibly the invisible materialized about him, furnishing forth almost tangibly his proper environment. They saw him in a pre-Volstead crowd, a little glass in his hand, and on his peaked head the red fez and strange insignia of the blatant mixer.

On the veranda the tall lean one awaited them. He proved to be the other's distinct antithesis: gray faced, tight lipped, as silent as his partner was voluble. He, too, was neatly dressed, but in a regulation suit of business gray with a dark shirt. He chewed on a cigar, and acknowledged the civilities with a brief nod and a briefer word, seeming to watch and appraise them from a distance. It seemed his name was Maxon.

The party settled themselves in chairs and on the railing of the veranda. Barker disappeared boisterously within to procure the ammunition for the proposed law busting. X. Anaxagoras mounted his monocle.

"Charming place you have here," he remarked. "Those seem to be very good trees. Are you logging?"

Maxon looked at him a second before replying.

"Mining," he said, briefly, at last. "That's our dump, there."

Betsy clasped her hands vivaciously.

"Oh," she cried, "I've always wanted to see a mine! I never have! You must take me down, won't you, Mr. Maxon?"

"You can't possibly go down a mine in those clothes," objected Marshall, fatuously.

Maxon transferred his gaze to her.

"There's nothing to see. A hole in the ground," he said, after his customary pause.

"But I've always *longed* to go down into a mine!" she insisted. "It's so romantic! I've read so much about them. They are very dangerous, aren't they? You're always seeing in the papers about miners being entombed, and striking, and all that. Do you have much trouble with your men?"

"I've never seen a mine either," struck in X. Anaxagoras. "I'd like to go down, too. Do arrange it, old chap. And those poor chaps who work down in a hole! My word, what a life! Is there much tuberculosis among them?"

"None," replied Maxon, shortly.

"How about explosions?" pursued X. Anaxagoras, with rising interest. "Fire damp and all that sort of thing? Have much trouble with that?" He had the air of attempting sophistication, of speaking as one man to another.

Maxon permitted himself a brief smile of contempt.

"This is a gold mine," he said, succinctly.

"Of course, to be sure!" agreed X. Anaxagoras.

"There's no fire damp in a gold mine," vouchsafed Maxon, with some relish. "That's coal mines."

"To be sure, how stupid of me," repeated X. Anaxagoras, vaguely, as though abashed.

"But you will take me down, won't you, Mr. Maxon?" pleaded Betsy. "I'll put on my tramping clothes. Tomorrow? When would it be most convenient?"

"I wouldn't take the risk of taking a woman," replied Maxon, shortly. He was evidently with difficulty holding in a bad temper.

"Then it *is* dangerous!" stated Betsy, with conviction. "I think mines are dreadful. Think of the poor men. I wonder how many of the brave fellows lose their lives for every ton of ore taken out!"

"My dear young lady," Maxon responded to this, "you exaggerate. It's no more dangerous than any other occupation."

"Then why can't I go?"

Maxon threw away his badly chewed cigar, seemed about to be rude, thought better of it.

"A woman is different," he managed at last.

Betsy apparently gave up the point with reluctance.

"I think it's mean," she pouted, "but Jerry and—and Clarence can tell me about it, anyway."

Barker at this point bustled out bearing drinks. At once Maxon fell into a silent background. He was effaced—

it seemed gladly—by the effervescence of his partner. The occasion frothed over. Barker shouted cordiality, hospitality; he exuded good fellowship. He was overwhelming. Betsy, too, seemed to withdraw a little as though piqued, the spoiled woman thwarted in a whim. From time to time she threw in a remark, but it was always on the same theme, voicing her disappointment, half hopefully repeating the suggestion, accepting only slowly Maxon's adamantine decision that she should not go down the mine, finally transferring her gadfly persistence to the detailing of just what the men were to see and report to her when *they* went down the mine.

"When can they go, Mr. Maxon?" she insisted. "When will it be most convenient? To-morrow?"

Maxon threw away another chewed cigar with an explosive gesture.

"Day after, if you must have it!" he snapped. "There's some ticklish work on now. Day after!"

Barker, at this, suddenly stopped booming and for the briefest instant the joviality faded from his face. Then he went ahead again full blast. It was a click, a check, a thing hardly noticeable, like a single miss in a many-cylindered engine. But X. Anaxagoras noticed.

The afternoon was drawing toward a close. Barker expanded on. He evidently was a social creature. One thing reminded him of another. He was full of anecdotes and jokes, which he detailed with great relish and much heartiness. Maxon sat back, tight lipped, and smoked silently at a cigar, which this time he had lighted. Only

thrice did he take any part in the conversation. Then he cut in ruthlessly and unapropos across the current of his partner's narrative.

"How did you happen to come in here?" he asked, abruptly, on the first occasion.

"We were anchored over the hill there," said Anaxagoras, truthfully so far, "lookin' for water. And one of our men saw your houses from the hill. So we came in to see if we could mail some letters. By the way, Jerry, got them with you?"

"By Jove, now! I forgot them! Silly ass!" cried Marshall, blankly.

But the fat man gave them to understand that this was no place to mail letters. They brought in their season's supplies, and they had no communication with the outside world until the season had closed.

"'World forgetting, by the world forgot!'" he quoted, unexpectedly, with one of his jovial laughs. "Never see a newspaper; don't want to! No mail to bother with. Doesn't worry me! I hate letters!"

Maxon made no comment but fell silent again.

Then, for the second time, he abruptly interrupted the flow of amenities.

"How did you get in?" he demanded.

Marshall looked at him blankly.

"Came in, in the yacht," said he, at last.

"Yes, I know; but the channel is difficult. How did you know how to get in?"

"Oh, that?" Marshall laughed emptily. "I leave all that to Benton. He's my sailing master, you know; and

a deuced good man, too. I don't know what I'd do without him. He's got a nose like a hound for rocks and reefs and all those things."

The third question came a little later, and in the same manner. This time it was X. Anaxagoras who took it upon himself to reply.

"Where are you from and where are you going?" demanded Maxon.

"Around the world," was his answer. "Sportin' thing to do, what? Started from New York and goin' right up the coast and across to China. Great trip!"

The visit prolonged itself. Several times Betsy shot a surreptitious glance of inquiry at her brother, but each time he made an almost imperceptible gesture of negation. They continued to sit on.

Then at last the empty landscape showed its first signs of life. At the top of the dump, which was plainly in view, a human figure appeared, then others. Shortly, a small group had gathered which, single file, descended the short trail to the houses. There were eight of them, all told, dressed in the usual blue overalls and wearing the regulation miners' caps. But as their features became distinguishable, X. Anaxagoras sat up with unconcealed surprise and mounted his monocle.

"By Jove!" he cried. "Japs!"

"Chinese," corrected Barker. "Yes, sir, we find them the best miners in the world! Industrious, honest, do what you tell them, don't cost much to feed, low wages. Great people!"

"I didn't know Chinese ever were miners!" observed

Marshall; "—laundries, and curio shops, and domestic service, and all that sort of thing. But not miners."

Another figure now emerged from the unseen shaft and came toward them. It stopped a moment, looking in the direction of the *Spindrift*, then descended the trail with long, swinging, energetic strides. The man passed below the veranda, glanced up, lifted his cap, and passed on to the other small building. The visitors saw a spare whip-cord sort of young man, tall and wiry, dressed in khaki, with high laced boots and a brown flannel shirt. His face was clear cut and aquiline; his cheeks lean; he wore a small moustache; and his eyes, as he looked up at them, were seen to be of a clear, steadfast blue.

"Nice-lookin' chap," observed X. Anaxagoras. "He a partner, too?"

"Engineer—sort of foreman," explained Barker.

"Looks like an Englishman," said Betsy. "I just *dote* on Englishmen—when they're nice—don't you?"

"Pretty cushy job you chaps have," drawled Marshall. "Just sit here and keep cool and let the gold roll in. I could do with a little of that myself. By Jove! that's an idea! The governor's always ragging me to do something."

"Provided the gold rolls in, young man," Maxon struck in, shortly. Barker glanced in his direction, then took up the lead.

"Yes, that's right," he boomed. "But we have great hopes. That's what you must have—faith and hope; otherwise you may be looking for little old charity." He chuckled at his joke.

Betsy caught her brother's glance and arose.

"It's been *too* delightful meeting you both," she gushed, "and I think it's quite too romantic for words. You must come out to see us on the *Spindrift*. Can't you dine with us, say, to-morrow? Do! At eight o'clock. You really must."

"Delighted, dear lady!" cried Barker. Maxon made no reply.

"And we'll have the mine expedition the day after," she reminded the latter, "and I shall put on my horridest old clothes, and you must be sure to change your mind." She smiled at him fascinatingly and turned to go.

"There's one thing I meant to ask, Mr. Maxon," said Marshall, with owlish solemnity. "About the men, now. Do you find it your experience that miners die off much earlier in life than in other professions?"

Maxon stared at him a moment with a contempt he made no effort to disguise.

"I couldn't say. I haven't had them long enough to have any of them die off," he answered, at length. He turned and went into the house, without waiting for them to complete the departure that had already been officially taken a half-dozen times. Barker accompanied them profusely to their boat.

"A fine man, Maxon," he felt it incumbent to say. "A little brief in his manner, perhaps, but a fine man of great ability. He takes his responsibilities very seriously."

"I just dote on these strong, silent men!" Betsy responded. "You just feel they are strong and grim."

Barker handed her into the boat and watched the little craft skim its way toward the yacht. At last he turned and made his way rather ponderously and thoughtfully back to the veranda of the house. Maxon had returned to it and was staring out at the *Spindrift*. Barker poured himself another drink. Neither spoke.

"I wonder what the devil we had to be inflicted with this for?" growled Maxon at last.

"They seem harmless enough," observed Barker.

"Harmless! They haven't an ounce of brains among them. But I can't be bothered."

"I'll take care of them," Barker reassured him. He sipped his drink. "But, R. K.," he ventured, after a moment, "do you think it's quite wise, taking them down the shaft? I was a little surprised at that."

"Oh, the fools can do no harm," rejoined Maxon, contemptuously. "Let 'em go down. What difference does it make? I can't be pestered with that idiot woman another minute. And I'm not going out to that boat to dinner, either. Dinner, at eight o'clock!"

"But, R. K.——" expostulated Barker.

"I'm not going to do it!" repeated Maxon, "and that's flat. You do it. You're good at that. That's what you are good for, isn't it?" he sneered, savagely. "I don't doubt that gang will have plenty to drink. By the way, put away those bottles and don't get them out again while they're here. We've done enough, and we haven't any too much of it." He glanced across at the other house. "Look out; here comes the other damn fool," he said, in a

warning tone, and seated himself in a deep chair far back on the veranda.

The young English-looking chap was approaching. He had cleaned up, and was now bareheaded, his hair sleeked back and shining with water. As he mounted the half-dozen steps he straightened his shoulders and into his frank blue eyes came a peculiar expression of frigid formality. Barker, all joviality again, stepped forward to meet him.

"Well, Arbuthnot, my boy, how goes it to-day? Good news, I hope? Ought to be getting close to good news by now."

"Total of fifteen feet; same formation," responded Arbuthnot, in crisp tones. "It will be necessary to continue the timbering." He did not respond in any degree to the other's manner.

"Well, what do you think of it? Ought to be something doing before long? Still think you're on the right track, eh?"

"I think so."

Maxon suddenly spoke up from the background.

"You've thought so before; and put in fifty feet of useless tunnel," he said, grumpily.

The engineer said nothing, but Barker interposed with his jolliest manner.

"To be sure, to be sure; but we've been over all that. Had to find out the way things went underground, didn't we, boy? Sort of exploratory operation on old Mother Nature, eh? But now we know how she fixed her ledges we've got it right this time, eh?"

"I think so," said the young man, steadily.

"How much farther we got to go? Oh, I mean about, of course. Can't lay it out to an inch, can we?"

The young man seemed about to speak, hesitated.

"I can't tell yet," he answered, finally.

"Well, keep at it! Keep at it!" cried Barker.

The engineer waited for a moment, then turned and went back toward the larger building, from which smoke had issued. Both men stared after him.

"Humph!" grunted Maxon at last.

CHAPTER XVII

THE shore party had not much to say to one another until they had regained the privacy of their cabin. Then they broke out in a flood of hilarity, comments, and finally questions.

"Satisfactory performance, Sid darling?" demanded Betsy.

"Masterly," he replied. "I became positively ashamed of you at times. You almost overdid it. If at any period you exhibited a trace of intelligence, I failed to remark the fact."

"I don't know," she countered, complacently. "I think myself I was a pretty bright child. Did you notice how I got you a chance to go down the mine? You did especially want to go down the mine, didn't you, Sid dear? And they didn't want us to go. Did you see little Fleshpots look at old Eats-'em-alive when he told us we could?"

"I did. And it was well done. I take it back about the intelligence. I mean intelligence apparent to the outsider. You are a bright child. As for Jerry! He might have advertised a collar! And that last speech about the men dying young—priceless!"

"You were no Herbert Spencer yourself," struck in Marshall, a trifle defensively. "Your use of that monocle

and your total loss of the final 'g' were enough to land you in any alert home for the feeble-minded."

"In short, we can all congratulate ourselves on a good job," summed up X. Anaxagoras. "I think I am safe in saying that they consider us quite harmless but a nuisance. That was exactly what I wanted."

Betsy crossed her pretty ankles comfortably and leaned back to listen.

"But, Sid dear, brilliant as your fellow conspirators undoubtedly are, there remain a few obscure points. In fact, they are all obscure. Won't you explain? What did you find out? What were you after?"

"Well, I found out several things; or, rather, I noticed several things. In the first place, the material on that dump is granite, nothing but granite. I particularly noticed that."

"That was clever of you," murmured Betsy. "But what of it?"

"Furthermore," continued her brother, without pausing to answer this question, "the whole formation of this cove is granite. There is no sign of quartz or quartzite; and the granite itself is in place—that's a mining term meaning that it is the country rock, the solid material of which the earth hereabouts is made."

"If I am willing to despise granite, will you please tell me why I should do so?" begged Betsy, meekly.

"Granite is not a favourable gold-bearing formation. I could at cursory glance make out no indication or reason for locating a mine in this place."

"Nevertheless, there it is," Marshall pointed out.

"Perhaps there might be indications you did not see."

"Perhaps. I do not consider my distant observations of first importance. I am merely mentioning what I saw."

"Go on," urged Betsy.

"Obvious and unusual reluctance to let us go down the shaft," X. Anaxagoras checked off. "Anxiety to size us up and especially to know whence and whither and how long."

"Why did you tell them we had come from New York and were going to China?" struck in Marshall.

"To reassure them—if they happened to need reassurance. I am of a benevolent nature and like to keep people happy as long as possible. Put yourself in the place of an honest miner who had not proved up his property. You'd want to keep it dark, wouldn't you?—until you were sure. Otherwise you'd have a lot of outsiders in here staking claims you might want for yourself, if things go well. Well, my statement assured them that they were safe from our blabbing."

"You said 'honest miner,'" observed Marshall, shrewdly.

X. Anaxagoras paid no attention.

"Next was the employment of Chinese miners. That was very interesting."

"Fleshpots explained that very nicely," Betsy reminded him.

"What he said was true. He might have added, however, other points of Mongolian character. The Chinaman is all that he says. He is also keen to get into the country, not given to talking, almost unidentifiable—

especially if he happens to be a smuggled Chinaman—and when his job is finished he disappears and is never found again. Also his testimony in a court of law is negligible. In short, if one were to engage in an undertaking in which labour is indispensable, but with which one did not wish to be identified, either now or in the future, Chinese would be the very men to employ."

"What is it you suspect? Tell me!" cried Betsy, impatiently.

"Before we go on to that, let's take up the last point of observation, the psychological. How do you size up our friends?"

They considered a moment thoughtfully. Betsy was the first to speak.

"Eats-'em-alive is bad-tempered," she said, slowly, "and I think he takes it out on poor little Fleshpots. It strikes me a good deal of his bad temper is impatience. He's fretting against something."

"Very good feminine intuition," approved her brother, "and absolutely accurate, in my opinion; but not the essential quite. How about you, Jerry?"

"I'm no psychologist," replied the latter, "but I wouldn't trust either of them as far as I could throw a cow, if that's what you mean."

"It's exactly what I mean. And I'll add on my own account that they are both a little scared—well, not scared, but uneasy."

"How about that engineer person?" asked Betsy. "Somehow, I liked his looks."

"I can't quite see myself how he comes in this gallery,"

confessed X. Anaxagoras. "He's an anomaly. There are several anomalies, and they need explanation."

"But what's the plot? Don't be so roundabout and exasperating. You haven't told us yet," Betsy reminded him. "We're being very patient."

"Another thing I noticed, that I had not realized until we dropped anchor," went on the Healer of Souls. "It is this: you remember the story I told you this morning? —about the man and the woman and the mine? Well, it's a long way around there by the way we came, but the point between the coves is, you will observe, a bulbous sort of promontory connected with the mainland by a very narrow, contracted wasp's-waist sort of neck. It's a long way around, but directly over that rim there it's a very short distance. We are at this moment actually a scant quarter mile from the exact spot where we sat while I told you that story!"

The other two sat forward as they caught the drift.

"We will have now to construct a hypothesis," continued X. Anaxagoras. "Let us do a little supposing. Supposing the detailed knowledge of the man's discovery were to come into the hands of someone. How that could happen is one of the anomalies to be explained: I had supposed only two people in the world knew of the bare facts, and I did not know that detailed knowledge existed at all. Suppose those into whose hands it fell were, or became, unscrupulous. I say 'became' because it seems probable that the first move would be a legitimate one in the direction of trying to negotiate with the woman. I can state with entire conviction that not only would this

fail, but that the subject would never get beyond a first mention of the country, even. Failing in this, what would be the next move? supposing our unscrupulous persons to possess force and determination?"

"Like Eats-'em-alive," interjected Betsy, breathlessly.

"Why, to appropriate what could not be otherwise acquired. When one appropriates what does not belong to one, it must be done in secret. To dig boldly on the property itself, exposed as its location is, would be to invite trouble. But to sink a shaft here, and then to run a tunnel under the narrow neck—to drift, as miners call it—and into the pocket would be a very simple matter."

"That's it! Of course it is!" cried Betsy, excitedly. "I'm certain of it!"

"It's a hypothesis; perhaps even a probable hypothesis. But it's not a certainty. It is possible this may be quite an independent enterprise, and that the knowledge of the man's mine is still unique to two people only. But the facts I have mentioned all have their significance. Also the whole layout. It is extremely unlikely that this place should ever be found by anybody. The coast is unfrequented, and there is nothing on earth to bring anybody in here."

"They *must* have been pleased to see the *Spindrift!*" chuckled Marshall.

"But that is not enough. Not only must they escape detection while the work is going on; but, in case of future attempts at development of the man's mine—which are entirely possible—the tunnel must inevitably be discovered and the looting laid bare. This work must never be

traceable to the looters. Hence the Chinese labour. And hence, what is of course obvious, the assumed names. Whatever the real identity of these men, I will wager they are not really Maxon and Barker."

"It's a certainty!" affirmed Marshall, with conviction.

"Not quite, but pretty nearly. I don't know much about mines, but when I get underground I can tell something by the direction the work is taking."

"It's astonishing that they let us underground!" marvelled Marshall.

"Not very. We played our parts well. They have no reason to suspect we would know anything about all this even if we actually belonged in the country. But don't forget we are passing through—and are utter damn fools. Besides, it takes a very experienced man to even guess offhand directions underground. I shall carry a compass, and you must see I get a chance to use it. We'll soon know something, anyway. It looks to me very probable. You see, once the tunnel is completed, it would not take very long to clean out the pocket—or pockets. It's accumulated there for them in the easiest possible form."

"What a splendid adventure!" cried Marshall.

"I wouldn't miss a bit of it for worlds!" cried Betsy.

"I'm afraid you'll have to, little sister," said X. Anaxagoras, gravely. "The day after to-morrow is the critical time. If what we suspect is true, we cannot afford to make a slip. You have a revolver, I suppose?" he asked Marshall.

"Oh!" cried Betsy, taken aback.

"I don't think there will be the slightest difficulty,"

her brother reassured her, "nor, if there were, do I anticipate any violence. But we must foresee everything. And we must see it through."

"Most certainly," agreed Marshall, emphatically. "Be a sport, Betsy."

"Oh, I'm a sport," said Betsy, rather faintly. "But can't you take one of the men? Rogg? He's as strong as a bull."

"The worst thing in the world. And we shall be quite all right. There are only three of them, and Fleshpots, as you call him, would count very little. The Chinese would not take part. But there'll be no trouble. The chance is of the remotest."

Betsy almost instantly recovered her spirits.

"I shall charm Fleshpots," she stated, decisively, "tomorrow evening. And if I don't engage him to attend on my bright eyes while you are underground, I'll go into a nunnery!"

"Good idea," approved her brother. "You see? That leaves only two, if the worst happens."

"Somehow, I'm not afraid of that young engineer," she said, thoughtfully.

"There is one further fact I have not yet mentioned," pursued the Healer of Souls. "It is, in my mind, not the least significant. Eats-'em-alive, as you call him, says his name is Maxon. Maxon happens to be the name of the man who found the mine and who now lies beneath the avalanche."

Betsy's quick mind caught an inference, and truth to tell she looked rather disappointed.

"But, Sid dear," she said, "isn't it possible then that everything is all right after all, that Mrs. Maxon's people are taking this method of getting around her in spite of herself? Eats-'em-alive might be her brother-in-law or some other connection."

"I happen to know," stated X. Anaxagoras, quietly, "that my friend had not a relative in the world."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE following day was ostentatiously spent in what Betsy called inane pursuits. She allowed herself to become the central figure in a series of helpless happenings. For example, she sat in the stern of the dinghy under her red parasol, surrounded by cushions, and was rowed aimlessly back and forth in the cove by the two men in white flannels. Later she sat on deck under an awning stretched across the main boom, half reclining in a deck chair, a book open but unread in her lap, a table with long cool drinks at her side, the men reclining on cushions at her feet. Still later, by a brilliant inspiration, she went ashore on the beach and took Roggsy for a walk on the end of a pink ribbon, to the vast astonishment and indignation of that volatile creature, who knew himself quite capable of accompanying any known expedition foot free, and who associated tethers only with a consciousness of guilt.

"I think," said she, "if I can manage it, I'll have Roggsy in to dinner. Surely every living American by now associates idle and brainless wealth with monkey dinners."

She entered into all this with histrionic gusto, which the men did not share in equal measure. They would have much preferred a rational life and were frankly bored.

Not so the crew. They watched these developments

with a rising curiosity. The departure from the normal was so radical that even the dullest caught the spirit of mystery. Shore leave was still denied. Something was in the air, and somehow the recollection of the episode of the spotty cow encouraged them to hope not only for interesting developments but also some degree of participation therein. The Ram received Plutarch's order for an eight-o'clock dinner with open incredulity. The meal hours of the *Spindrift's* after cabin usually coincided with those of the crew, which were simple, easily remembered, and early.

"You-all are crazy," he told Plutarch, majestically; and went in person for corroboration. He returned from his interview shaking his huge head. "You-all ain't crazy," he voiced his apology to Plutarch, "but somebody sure am."

The Ram had cooked late snacks when the fishing demanded, but never before had he been called upon to do a course dinner "'long 'bout time to go to baid," as he grumbled.

At quarter before eight the longboat with a full crew all in white rowed to the beach to bring off the guests.

"There's only one of them," observed Betsy, as it pushed off. "Eats-'em-alive isn't there. Stupid! We ought to have asked the engineer!"

But X. Anaxagoras shook his head.

"We've got to get hold of him separately," said he.

Fleshpots came aboard robustiously. He presented Maxon's apologies. At the last moment some work had come up that had to be done at once. But he did not

linger over this point. It was evident that he had come to enjoy himself, and his little eyes lighted up at the sight of the small square table and the cocktail materials standing ready.

"Ice!" he cried. "Well! well! I haven't seen any since last winter! Think of an ice machine! This certainly is some boat!"

"Won't you mix them?" inquired Marshall. "I'll wager you can make a good cocktail."

Barker's eyes brightened again and he advanced without hesitation on the table.

"My son, I'll mix you something better than a cocktail," he stated, impressively, "—a Trinidad Swizzle. Down where I come from I am known as the Swizzle King. Lord-e-e! Angostura! Let's see what we've got here."

"If there's anything else you need, pray ask for it," urged Marshall. "I'm sure my man can find it."

Barker went into executive session with Plutarch. Under direction the latter disappeared, to return bearing various things. Barker, his back to them, mixed and measured with meticulous anxiety. He had dropped his hilarious manner. He was busy, grave, serious, preoccupied. This was a serious business. At last he turned toward them, the shaker in his two hands, his face reillumined with his jolly smile.

"No swizzle," he uttered his dictum, "can possibly be any good unless it is shaken up to the swizzle song."

He began vigorously to agitate the shaker, keeping time to his voice.

"There was an old soldier and he had a wooden leg,
And he had a wooden hen and it laid a wooden egg.
It laid and it laid them all around the farm—
And another little drink wouldn't do any ha-a-a-r-m!"

As he drawled out the last word he snatched off the cap with a flourish and began to pour out the concoction in the glasses which Plutarch held ready.

"There!" he cried. "Put that where it ought to go! That'll put hair—— Oh Lord! Jimmy Barker, there's ladies present!"

"Here's glad you are aboard," said Marshall, formally.

They drank. Betsy took the merest sip.

"Delicious! Simply delicious!" she cried. "I never tasted anything quite so heavenly! How *do* you do it?"

"Oh, it's very simple," replied Barker, modestly.

"That's all very well to say—that it's very simple. But there's an awful lot in mixing it right, and you know it," protested Betsy.

"Well, there is a knack," admitted Barker. "But you aren't drinking yours."

"I love drinks," said she, "but I can't drink them. I always take just a teeny-weeny taste to aggravate myself with. It's a shame really to waste one on me." She smiled at him fascinatingly and held out her glass. "I've barely touched it," she suggested.

Barker took the glass gallantly.

"I've always thought they might be improved with a little more sweetening," said he, ponderously.

"Oh, Mr. Barker!" cried Betsy.

There were dividends, of course; and then they went down to dinner. It was a good dinner; the Ram had recovered from his shock. Sherry accompanied the soup; burgundy, a delicious entrée; champagne—again with real ice—was served with curried chicken.

"This is like Heaven," Barker told his hostess. "It's the first good meal I've had for six months."

It is to be regretted that the said hostess plied him with drink. This was the more reprehensible in that it was so very easy; no sporting struggle at all; like catching rock cod. Barker became more and more expansive, more and more cordial. He proved to be a really artistic raconteur with an amazing fund of anecdote and story. His eyes glistened and tiny beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. He was thoroughly and genuinely enjoying himself, giving himself up to the occasion. Betsy easily got him to promise to teach her to make the celebrated swizzles. As easily she enlisted him to show her a clam beach the following afternoon while the men were making their visit underground.

"Our cook makes the most wonderful chowder!" she exclaimed. "We'll take some of the men to dig for us. If I can't go down in the mine—and I think it's horrid of you not to let me——"

"My dear young lady," Barker interrupted, earnestly, "I'd be delighted to have you. But my partner——"

"I'm sure you would. He's an ogre, and it serves him right to have some tiresome work to do. You don't *very* much mind not going down with them, do you?" she languished at him.

"I'd give the whole mine for the privilege!"

He was very wobbly and expansive; willing to talk, apparently, on any subject. To all appearance his caution had been long since dissipated and his observation and discrimination hazed. Yet he really said nothing either of the mine or himself. Even the most judicious and harmless approaches toward either of these subjects brought about an almost comic change from guilelessness to shaky, half-sobered caution. And once, quite casually, Betsy addressed her brother as Sid.

"Thought you said his name was Clarence," instantly struck in Barker.

"Sidney Clarence," replied Betsy, sentimentally. "Don't you think it a lovely name? So full of historical associations!"

They had coffee and several kinds of liquors on deck. At nearly midnight the guest took his leave, yielding without too much reluctance to the gift of a final Havana. He was still jovial and clear-headed, but the grinning sailors had some difficulty in persuading him that the black, smooth water was ill adapted to pedestrianism.

"Well!" sighed Marshall, once he had safely departed. "I must say you're a good little siren, Betsy, but I can't say you accomplished much except to make one large gaping deficit in the ship's supplies." He examined her contemplatively. "Ye gods!" he said, fervently, at last. "Imagine being tied for life to a woman like that!"

"I know how to make you appreciate me, darling," replied Betsy. "I sort of like little Fleshpots, in a sneak-

ing kind of way," she submitted. "He's probably a rascal, but he's an engaging rascal."

"He's no fool," said Marshall. "I notice nobody got anything out of him."

"It seems to me," said X. Anaxagoras, "that I got quite a good deal out of his reticences."

"And, anyway, I have him tied up for to-morrow," Betsy reminded them.

"Hope you'll enjoy yourself," said Marshall, "but he'll be sober by then. And that's absolutely the last bottle of benedictine!"

"Let's turn in," yawned X. Anaxagoras. "By to-morrow night we ought to know more."

CHAPTER XIX

LATE the following afternoon Betsy met them on their return from the underground expedition. For this they had carefully dressed the part, not as practical men about to go down a shaft, but as what utter damn fools might conceive to be the proper thing. This was a little difficult, but was accomplished. Marshall had Plutarch put a dazzling polish on two pairs of brown outing boots —which, he sadly remarked, would probably ruin them as proper recipients for wholesome water-resisting grease. He also unpacked from a stored box two pairs of white polo trousers. A Norfolk jacket over a silk shirt with a lilac tie seemed satisfactory in his own case; but of Norfolk jackets, unfortunately, he possessed only one. He generously offered the rig to X. Anaxagoras, but the latter declined.

"I've no right to that," he said, touching a ribbon sewed to the lapel, "and there's one case where I won't sail under false colours."

Marshall looked at the bit of colour almost shamefacedly.

"Do unsew it, won't you, Betsy?" he begged. "I feel rather silly with it myself."

"Indeed I will not!" she cried, indignantly. "I'm proud of it!"

"I'll have another silk shirt, if you don't mind," X. Anaxagoras settled it, "but I'll not wear a coat. Sleeves rolled up, you know; brawny miner stuff."

Seized by a sudden inspiration Betsy disappeared to return with two white sun helmets.

"We had them in the tropics," she explained. "They'll be just *too* sweet!"

Marshall looked doubtful.

"Oh, I *say!*" he protested. "Isn't that a little too thick? Sun helmets! down a mine!"

"Well, perhaps it is," conceded Betsy, regretfully, "but they would have looked so—so sort of explore- and out-of-doors. And, anyway, I don't think they're any worse than the white breeches."

"I shall explain very carefully that they seemed useful because they'll launder," said Marshall, loftily.

At the last moment the men quietly tucked their revolvers under their belts and inside their shirts, and X. Anaxagoras deposited a compass in his breeches pocket.

"I shall make this clam thing short," were Betsy's last words to them. "I shall be dying to hear."

They returned toward sundown to find her eagerly awaiting them. At first she got very little satisfaction from them, for they were overflowing with mischievous self-admiration over the part they had been playing and its effect on Maxon. Betsy found she had to be patient and let the effervescence spend itself. When they had mutually and satisfactorily agreed that they were the undoubted chief nuts of the universe, she began to press for details.

"Trouble?" X. Anaxagoras sobered enough to answer her at last. "Not a breath of it." He laid aside his revolver with a fantastic gesture, "Avaunt, O symbol of self-distrust! We descended the mine under the grumpy guidance of our amiable friend, who had the air of wanting to get it over with, to cut it short, to get rid of us. We were full of animation and, by Jove! also full of questions calculated to drive a technical man to an avoidance of homicide only by recourse to strong drink. By the way," he interpolated, "that's one thing we did find out. Old Eats-'em-alive is no technical man. He doesn't know the first principles, not only of mines, but of mechanics of any sort. Our engineer friend is the boy who attends to all that." He chuckled. "The engineer friend was much affected by us. Old Eats-'em-alive was bitter with savage contempt, but the engineer looked on us as wholly incredible. 'They wa'n't no sich animile.' He seemed especially concerned about Jerry."

"Oh, I don't know," said the latter, defensively.

"Well, I do. He couldn't keep his eyes off you. He's a well-brought-up youth. He has thoroughly learned that important infantile admonition that one should not speak until spoken to. And then his replies were admirable for their economy of expression."

"But what did you see? What did you find out?" demanded Betsy.

"They have put down a shaft," said X. Anaxagoras, sobering, "and have made two drifts. The first, which Eats-'em-alive took us into to the end, was only about fifty feet long and ended in country rock. He showed

us this quite volubly and evidently had the idea that this should satisfy us and that he might now be able to show us out. He tried to make us think the other was just like it, and that now we'd seen all there really was to be seen."

"I sprung some more of my interest in the dear brave miners," struck in Marshall, "and after a little he let us follow out the other."

"This had penetrated some distance." X. Anaxagoras took up the story. "It was difficult to tell just how far, but I made it about five hundred paces. The coolies were working there. They had a little track and a car pushed by hand to carry out the rock, and we had to stoop and dodge and keep out of the way. Here we found the engineer. It was interesting to see his face when he finally took us all in. They have acetylene torches, so there was a pretty good light. Eats-'em-alive, apparently with considerable relief, turned the stream of our interrogative asininity in his direction. As I said, he answered us with really admirable brevity."

"All this," said Betsy, "is in itself of thrilling interest and as local colour leaves nothing to be desired. But suppose you come to the point."

"The drift," said X. Anaxagoras, "heads precisely as I thought it would. The distance is, at a guess, almost right. The end of the tunnel must by now be quite close to the old waterfall's basin."

"Then you were right?" cried Betsy.

"I have no doubt of it whatever."

"And these men are——"

"Engaged in nefarious enterprises. Precisely."

"Oh! What are we going to do about it?"

"Stop them, of course."

"But what are you going to do?"

X. Anaxagoras produced a cigarette which he lighted carefully before replying.

"The obvious thing," he supplied at last, "would be to return with proper authority and force. But I am not so sure. There's some element in the situation. I don't know what it is. I just have a hunch. I feel it."

"Mahatma stuff," interjected Betsy, mischievously. "You ought to have thought of it yourself."

"Something like that," agreed X. Anaxagoras, soberly. "I don't want to suggest a move until I find out what it is. I'd like to settle that engineer in my own mind. I wish we could get hold of him."

"Why don't you, then?" inquired Betsy, with some sense. "Invite him aboard."

X. Anaxagoras chuckled.

"It's been tried. Jerry asked him. He answered that he was too busy for us."

"I should describe his manner as curt," supplied Marshall.

"But we've got to get hold of him," continued the Healer of Souls, "and we must seriously put our heads together to determine how. What would you suggest, Betsy? You're the social agitator."

"Well," returned Betsy, with an air of profound deliberation, "in my opinion, since you are so good as to ask it, the very best thing to do would be to advance to

the starboard rail and take the painter of his boat as he comes alongside."

They followed the direction of her gesture. The engineer was approaching in a small boat.

So blank an expression of amazement overspread the face of X. Anaxagoras that both the others laughed.

"Our little Mahatma can't claim to know about this, anyway!" chortled Betsy. "Caught him napping this time!"

But the Healer of Souls recovered himself instantly.

"No funny business," he warned, rapidly. "Drop the monkey shines."

He had no time to say more. The boat was already alongside. The engineer had evidently not paused to clean up, for he was still dusty from the mine. He had, however, put on a coat.

Marshall advanced to the rail.

"Come aboard," he invited, hospitably. "Let me take your painter."

The engineer did not reply, nor did he accede to Marshall's request. Shipping his oars he stood up in the small boat to face them. So seen from above he was a very attractive young man. His face was serious and a trifle flushed, and his blue eyes looked steadily and with a decided hostility up into those of his would-be host. He had the air of a man who had come on a disagreeable business which, nevertheless, he would see through. Indeed, his first words indicated as much.

"This," said he, stiffly, touching a medal which he had fastened to his coat, "is rather an especial thing that happens to mean a great deal to a very few men. I be-

lieve only some half score are privileged to wear it." He lowered his eyes significantly to the ribbon in Marshall's Norfolk jacket; and stood waiting uncompromisingly.

Marshall flushed violently; then, as comprehension came to him, his mouth twitched. He made no direct reply, but raised his voice to call for Benton. The latter, a burly square figure, emerged from the forward hatch and came down the deck. An expression of fierce contempt swept the countenance of the young man in the small boat alongside and his muscles tightened, but he still waited.

"Please get me the ship's papers," requested Marshall, and his mouth twitched again at the brief but guarded bewilderment that flashed into the young man's eyes.

They waited in silence while the errand was being performed.

"Thank you," said Marshall, quietly, when the mate had returned with the documents. "That will be all, Benton." He turned courteously to the young man alongside. "I do not believe we have been formally introduced," he said, courteously. "Permit me. My name is Marshall." He held out the ship's papers, on the outside of which, of course, his full name was plainly printed.

The engineer stared at them, the blood slowly mounting to his forehead.

"Sorry," he managed at last. "I've made an ass of myself. There's nothing to say." He made as though to take up his oars. Then the stiffness melted from his manner and a new and attractive boyishness cast an appeal into his voice. "You must think me an awful rotter!" he cried. "I don't know what to say."

"Come aboard, man; come aboard!" urged Marshall, heartily. "We ought to have an awful lot to say to each other. I don't even know which one of us you are."

"I'm Arbuthnot," jerked out the latter. "I'm ashamed to say I thought——"

"That I was a fake. Forget it: I don't blame you. Ribbon's cheap," grinned Marshall. "You're the Aussie who cleaned out the pill box. Come aboard."

Betsy and X. Anaxagoras came to the rail, looking down on the very embarrassed young man.

"Yes, do, Mr. Arbuthnot," she begged. "Maybe we aren't such idiots as we looked."

All three burst into a shout of laughter.

Arbuthnot hesitated, then handed up his painter and slowly clambered aboard. He was very much embarrassed and ill at ease, started once more to express his regrets, but was cut short by Marshall's eager and genuine cordiality. He bustled about, making his visitor comfortable, bringing out cigarettes and cigars and drinks, arranging the chairs.

"Do you know," he told the Australian, when they had finally settled down, "you're the first of us I've seen since the well-known dust-up. I've kept track of our men, of course; but beyond your names I never saw one of you. Lord! we were a well-scattered lot when they got through with us that day!"

"You took a piece of H E, as I remember the reports," said Arbuthnot. "Take you long to get over it?"

"It didn't touch me," corrected Marshall. "Just blew me off the face of the earth and left me there for a while.

I wasn't really scratched up much. I went on with the show and saw it through."

Arbuthnot glanced at him understandingly.

"I know," he commented. "Left you jumpy though, what?"

"No, just dead. Couldn't get up any interest. Lasted me until about a year ago. Had a good doctor." He glanced at X. Anaxagoras.

The other two, having fulfilled the amenities, retired to the background and let them talk war. This they did eagerly, boyishly, in short, elliptical, almost incomprehensible references.

"We don't ordinarily chatter war like this, Mrs. Marshall," Arbuthnot apologized, "but this is an unusual occasion."

"I quite understand," Betsy reassured him, "and I want to seize the moment to say that it was I who sewed that ribbon on his Norfolk jacket. I was so proud of his right to wear it—when finally I found it out—that I sewed it on everything in sight, including, I believe, the dog's collar. I was soon instructed, and then I had a job taking them all off again from all but the proper garments. The Norfolk got overlooked. I tell you this because Jerry never will, and later he'd probably die of mortification."

Arbuthnot, even as he laughed, looked toward her with a faint surprise, seeming really to see her for the first time. As Betsy had, since coming in, changed from her stage clothes, what he saw appeared to puzzle him a little.

But his attention was distracted only for the moment.

Marshall was asking him his adventures since the war.

"And how did you find things back home?" he inquired; "as rotten there as they are here?"

"To tell you the truth," replied Arbuthnot, "I don't know. I've been going home ever since I was demobbed, and this is as far as I've got. I took my discharge in London, like a fool, went stony, and have been working my passage ever since. Thought there'd be some good jobs in my line—bad times. Then, too, I've not had too good luck with my health. Went blighty in San Francisco, in fact. When I came out I was worse than stony. Then I ran into this job, and here I am. I'll get enough out of this, and a little better, to get me home."

They chattered on for nearly an hour, all reticences of age, of race, and of temperament swept away by this backwash of heroic moments from the past. Betsy and her brother sat silent, watching. At length Arbuthnot glanced at the lowering sun.

"By Jove!" he cried. "I'd no idea! I must be getting back. I've my day's report to write up. I told Maxon I'd just run out to see if I could borrow some fishin' tackle."

"Why, certainly!" cried Marshall, heartily. "We've any amount!"

Arbuthnot looked embarrassed again.

"It was an excuse, really," said he. "I wouldn't have the cheek——"

"Nonsense." Marshall grinned at the recollection of what had been the other's real errand. "Do you really want some? What sort? Are there any trout?"

"Trout!" almost shouted Arbuthnot, "There's a lake back here about two miles that's full of them. And big ones! With proper tackle a man could have the grandest sport in the world!" His eyes were shining. "I've cut a way up there in my time off, but I haven't a thing but a few old fishhooks and a piece of cuttyhunk. I tie it on to a willow pole. It's criminal!" he laughed. "I tried to make me some flies on those old hooks, but I couldn't do anything with them. The only thing was to use the Garden Hackle and drag them out by main strength. It was criminal. Except a fish occasionally to eat, I've given it up."

"Haven't they any tackle at all?" queried Marshall.

"They!" ejaculated the other, contemptuously.

"Well, I should think you might send out for some."

"We never send out: we have our supplies for the season."

"Garden Hackle?" queried Betsy, catching back at an unfamiliar term.

"Worms, Mrs. Marshall," grinned Arbuthnot. "Why, if you really like fishin'"—he returned instantly to Marshall—"I'll show you some sport fit for a king!"

"I've never had much luck with a fly on these lakes so late in the season," said Marshall, doubtfully.

"This one is very cold. And there's a trick—possibly you know it. A wee little spinner, no larger than a thrippence."

"I don't fancy spinner fishing much. If they don't come to a fly, I generally let them alone," submitted Marshall.

"Same here. But this is what I mean. You tie on

your drop fly, and then in the tail loop you tie your little spinner. The spinner gets their attention, and then they take the fly. You don't want a big spinner; just a flick of metal that won't interfere with your cast in the least."

"I never heard of that," said Marshall, interested. "I'd like to try that. I remember once I was camped with a party on one of the rivers that flow into the north shore of Lake Superior. This was before the war; before people fished that country much. It was in September. There were lots of big trout, but they'd stopped biting. Nobody could catch any. I'd whipped a pool for an hour without getting a rise, and was sitting on a rock smoking when I noticed the natural flies were falling off the bushes into the water. It was late in the season and they were dying, I suppose. And every once in a while a trout would come up and take one. So I quit casting my fly on the water. I'd cast it against a rock or a boulder and then just let it fall off. I got a dozen big ones."

"Now, that's what I call out-guessin' them," commented Arbuthnot, admiringly. "I fancy a dry fly might have fetched them."

Marshall jumped up.

"I want to show you something pretty," said he. "Wait a minute."

He popped below and popped back again, carrying a round fibre case a trifle more than a foot in length.

"Great thing for the brush," he explained, as he opened it. "You can wear it on your belt where it's out of the way."

"A belt rod?" said Arbuthnot. "They may be all right, but I don't quite fancy them. Bad action."

"Wait until you see this one," urged Marshall. "Look here." He produced one of the lengths. "See how it's made. The bamboo is bulged ever so slightly between the ferrules. That compensates for the metal, and the result is she springs evenly the whole length." He rapidly fitted the pieces together, and triumphantly handed the rod to the other.

"Four and a half ounces," said he, "and if you ever had a sweeter-acting three piece—or two piece, for that matter—in your hands, I'll throw it overboard!"

Arbuthnot whipped the slender wand back and forth, watching critically the curve of its bend. He rested the tip delicately against the yacht's rail and bent it in an arc.

"Wait until I string her up!" cried Marshall. "Give her here."

He set the reel in place and ran the lines out through the guides.

"Try her," he urged. "Here, you can get room for a cast over this way."

He started for the port side forward of the awning. X. Anaxagoras interposed quietly.

"Pardon me," he suggested. "If you're going to try that thing, would you mind doing it on the other side of the boat?"

"Certainly, but why?" asked Marshall, staring at him, puzzled.

"There's a better view."

"View!"

"Yes—from the shore," said X. Anaxagoras, blandly. "I understood Mr. Arbuthnot that he had told Maxon he had come off to borrow fishing tackle. Why not gratify that worthy gentleman by letting him see him doing it?"

Neither enthusiast paid attention to the proper purport of this remark. They merely moved abstractedly to the starboard side.

"Mind your back cast with the rigging!" warned Marshall.

Arbuthnot began to manipulate the rod, lengthening the line in the air before laying it on the water. It was instantly evident that he knew the business. The line was taken up by a strong flick of the wrist; at exactly the moment its flying weight had bent the rod backward to its maximum, the wrist flicked forward again. The line, describing a graceful loop, came forward, straightened out. Arbuthnot checked the motion of the rod with a delicate twist. The line's end settled softly as a thistledown upon the water. Farther and farther it reached out, until it was falling a good sixty feet from the yacht's side.

"By Jove, you can cast!" exclaimed Marshall, admiringly.

"Four and a half ounces, you say?" sighed the Australian, at last reeling in. "It's a wonder! And wouldn't one of those three-pounders give you a time on that!"

"Three-pounders! Do they run that big?"

"I've caught them. And some may go larger."

"By Jove, we must have an expedition!" cried Marshall.

"By Jove, we must!" cried Arbuthnot.

They gazed into each other's eyes ecstatically.

"Now I *must* be going," said Arbuthnot after a moment.

"But you're going to stay for dinner, of course," struck in Betsy.

Arbuthnot glanced down at himself.

"I'm all of a muck," he objected. "Thank you, but I'd better not."

"We shall not dine for a half hour: go and change. We sha'n't let you off."

"Well—thank you, I will." He moved toward his small boat.

X. Anaxagoras stepped forward.

"Here," said he. "Don't forget this.'

He thrust toward the other a rod in a case and a handful of miscellaneous reels, lines, and nets.

"But what does he want of that?" cried Marshall. "Good Lord, Sid, that's salmon tackle!"

"It's the first I saw," explained X. Anaxagoras, firmly. "I didn't take time to look. He came to borrow fishing tackle, and fishing tackle he's going to borrow. I don't believe the revered Maxon knows a fishing rod from a gill net. And I believe always in fulfilling one's promises, especially to stern parents or employers. It adds, as one of our great statesmen once said, an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative."

Arbuthnot looked up as though startled. For an instant he and the Healer of Souls looked deep into each other's eyes. Then he took the tackle.

"Thanks awfully," he muttered, embarrassedly; and leaped into his boat.

CHAPTER XX

THE three watched him rowing toward the shore, then turned away to prepare for dinner.

"Well," said Betsy, with conviction, "nobody can tell me there's anything wrong with *that* young man!"

"I'd bet my last cent on him!" asserted her husband, with equal conviction.

They both turned a little defiantly to the Healer of Souls, mutely challenging his opinion. But the latter refused to be challenged.

"I'm willing to make a little bet on him myself," said he, equably. "In fact, I'm going to do so, this very evening. And, for a change," he told Marshall, ironically, "I want a little chance to do some talking myself. I want an hour with this young man alone."

Arbuthnot reappeared within the half hour. He had changed into the gray flannels no young male of English blood seems ever to be without, even in the direst circumstances. Shortly they went down to dinner.

The meal was a jolly one, for the young engineer appeared to have accepted them definitely as of his own race, and met them on a footing of easy unconstraint. In this atmosphere of sociability, of dainty foods and drink, he expanded in an hour to a good fellowship which in the normal course of events might have required weeks to attain, if in-

deed it were attained at all. A long deprivation of just the human atmosphere he here breathed had prepared his responses. At the close of the meal Betsy and Marshall arose to go on deck, but X. Anaxagoras merely pushed back his chair.

"Mr. Arbuthnot and I will just smoke here for a minute or so," said he. "We'll join you in a few minutes."

He gave no further reason. Betsy and Marshall disappeared. X. Anaxagoras offered his guest a cigar, but himself filled his pipe. They lit up and sat for a season in sociable silence while Plutarch cleared away. Noah arose from the cushions on the transom where he had been reclining, stretched, arched his back, leaped to the floor and stepped daintily forward to acquire some knowledge of this stranger. Apparently he found the inspection satisfactory, for he uttered one of his inquiring "p-r-r-t-s" and leaped to Arbuthnot's knees, where he settled himself into a luxurious furry ball and began sleepily to purr. The young man rested his hand absently on the little animal. His eyes were vacantly following the lazily eddying smoke. X. Anaxagoras also was silent, but he was leaning forward, his elbows on the table, his eyes fixed with a singular intentness on the young man opposite.

The ship's fabric seemed absolutely still. No sound came through the forward bulkheads, the cordage overhead had dropped its song; even the open portholes failed to admit the customary *lap-lapping* of tiny wavelets against the side. There was no faintest motion: the yacht might have been set in concrete. There hung an utter stillness, a suspension of all the ordinary physical sensations that lie

beneath consciousness like a foundation in the void on which to arrange the hours of customary life. And, fancifully enough, it seemed to Arbuthnot that strange forces and influences which customary life holds at a distance, presences that brood remote in forest or night shadows, or hover outside of camp fires in the wilderness, had somehow drawn nearer at hand, were but just outside the opened portholes, enfolding the structure of man's fabrication, dissolving it as a mist, leaving him in his inner essence cradled, as the yacht hung in the thin suppporting medium of its suspension, by an intangible and embracing fluid of power. Arbuthnot was not a fanciful young man, and he shook himself free with a start. X. Anaxagoras was looking at him quietly.

"You cannot be far from the pocket now," the latter remarked in a casual tone. "Indeed, you must be fairly on the lip of the basin below the old waterfall."

"Just about," replied Arbuthnot, puffing strongly at his nearly extinct cigar. "I think ten feet more of rockwork will take us into it." Then he sat upright in surprise. "What do you know about it?" he cried.

"I know all about it," replied X. Anaxagoras.

Arbuthnot looked puzzled and a little uneasy.

"I didn't know—I was led to believe that the situation was quite secret," he said, at last.

"What situation?" queried X. Anaxagoras

But Arbuthnot had recovered himself.

"Isn't that for you to tell me?" he asked.

X. Anaxagoras considered.

"Why, yes, in a way, I suppose it is," he conceded, in

approval of the other's discretion. Briefly, then, he detailed the story of the mine as he had told it to Betsy and Marshall after the expedition to the lake. Arbuthnot listened attentively, nodding from time to time.

"Yes," he said, after the tale was finished, "that was my understanding. Extraordinary story, isn't it? and pathetic. But I must say I am surprised that you know of it. I had understood that it was quite secret."

"I knew Maxon—the man who found the mine. I grubstaked him at one time. But in turn I am surprised—I mean by this work here and all. I supposed Mrs. Maxon quite irreconcilable to any thought of it. I am a professional man, and I would have staked my professional reputation that nothing would have broken through the complex which events had so strongly laid upon her."

Arbuthnot hesitated, looked at Anaxagoras.

"Of course, I'm more or less working in confidence," he said, at last, "but as you know so much of the situation, and in such a peculiar way, I can see no harm in your knowing the rest, so you will realize you should keep quiet about it. You see, Mrs. Maxon knows nothing about this work."

"No?" encouraged the Healer of Souls.

"Her people quite realize the situation. But there is the child: and I understand she lives in poor circumstances and will accept no help. Some kind of family misunderstanding, wasn't it? So, you see, Maxon had the idea that the pocket might be opened in this way without either disturbing the surface of the other property or her knowing anything about it until it was all over and done with. It seemed the soundest plan to them all."

"To whom?"

"Why, to her family. In a way, I suppose," stated Arbuthnot, as though arguing, "it's a bit thick; for it is her property. But then, again, she's hardly responsible." He paused, but received no reply. "Anyway," he added, defensively, "it's none of my affair."

He smoked a moment in silence.

"That's the way it is," he said, then.

X. Anaxagoras made no answer. Again the utter quietness of the evening drew close about the little ship. But this time, to Arbuthnot's aroused consciousness, there seemed to be in it none of the former peace. It hung balanced with some vague portent, as a clear chemical mixture which a slight touch will precipitate into strange forms. And though in such a chemical mixture the process waits passively, here was an active and urgent force as though of expectation. He looked across at his companion, and he seemed suddenly to see there the expectation and the urgent dynamic force of it embodied. Arbuthnot shook himself awake again.

"Do you know," he said, with a sudden burst of confidence that surprised himself, "I'd like to chuck this job!"

"Why?" asked X. Anaxagoras, quietly.

"I don't know," replied Arbuthnot, with an embarrassed laugh. "Fed up on it, I suppose. God knows I was down and out and on my uppers when I took it, but hanged if I wouldn't rather throw over the job than work with these beggars any more."

"Why?" asked X. Anaxagoras again.

"I don't know. They're disagreeable enough to me, but that's part of the job."

X. Anaxagoras leaned forward. He spoke very slowly, and without emphasis.

"Before dinner," he said, with apparent irrelevance, "I announced to the others that I was going to lay a wager. I am now about to announce the stakes. You wish to chuck the job because you are becoming uneasily suspicious of these men."

Arbuthnot stirred uneasily.

"Why should I be?" he asked, at length.

"I don't know. That's for you to tell me."

A silence fell. X. Anaxagoras waited.

"Look here," Arbuthnot burst out at last. "I'm in the employ of these people. Why should I discuss them with you?"

X. Anaxagoras made no reply. He waited. Arbuthnot made as though to rise, thought better of it, chewed at his short moustache. Finally, he looked up and caught the other's eyes. For perhaps twenty seconds they stared at each other.

"I never did like them," Arbuthnot jerked out, at last, "from the moment I saw them. But what could I do? I was stony broke and I wanted desperately to get home. It's a short job—soon over. The pay is good. A man can't pick his employers by whether he likes them personally. They told a straight enough story and they had the documents."

"What documents?" asked X. Anaxagoras.

"Why, Maxon's patent of the land; and his notebooks and diagrams of the pocket and all that. I had it out with myself in the berth on the way up. There were a lot of things I didn't fancy, but nothing definite, nothing to be suspicious about. I just didn't like them. And they were furtive and in a hurry about it all. Of course, it was natural they should be furtive," he added, reflectively. "The whole thing was necessarily very secret. They took extraordinary precautions. They landed their stores and men down the coast and came all the way here in small boats. I didn't really think that out of the way, though, come to think of it. If the thing was to be kept dark it was natural. And then there's the matter of the labour—north of China men—and all armed as if to repel pirates. Look here!" He turned on X. Anaxagoras a little fiercely. "Why should I talk to you like this? There's nothing to be suspicious of, as far as I know. I'm just fed up on the job."

He stopped abruptly. He was evidently ashamed and a little uneasy, and somewhat at a loss to account for himself. X. Anaxagoras said nothing for a few moments. Then he laid aside his pipe with a decisive gesture.

"You are suspicious," he stated, calmly, "and for a very good reason, the best in the world—that your intuitions are aroused. They are infallible when correctly interpreted. Now listen to me. I am going to tell you a few facts. In the first place, Mrs. Maxon, with the exception of the child, has neither kith nor kin nor connection whatever, anywhere in the world. In the second place Maxon, is not this man's name; nor, for that matter, is Barker the name of his partner. This operation in which you are engaged is in effect a

raid on a treasure store which you, as a practical mining engineer, know can be gutted and made away with in a very brief space of time once the work has reached it. Such are the main facts. But I will add others. The work is being done in this roundabout way, not to spare Mrs. Maxon's feelings, but to avoid detection. Chinese labour is employed so that it cannot be traced should, in the remote future, the claim be opened from above and the underground works discovered. You, an Australian, were selected for the same reason."

He picked up his pipe again and sat back. Arbuthnot stared at him for some moments. Conflicting emotions mirrored themselves in his face.

"Why should I believe all that?" he demanded, heatedly, at last. "What proof have you?"

"Immediately available—none."

"How do I know you're not working some game yourself? Why should I believe you?"

X. Anaxagoras looked at him steadily.

"For no reason," he answered, at last. "except that you do."

CHAPTER XXI

X. ANAXAGORAS stepped to the open hatchway and addressed the shadowy figures sitting silently on the open deck.

"I win my bet," he said, quietly. "Will you please come down?"

They appeared, blinking against the light. X. Anaxagoras seated himself at the head of the table as though he were the chairman of a meeting and with a motion of the hand indicated to the others to take their places also at the table.

"We were right," he told them briefly; "and our friend Arbuthnot has filled in the last gaps." He sketched in a few words what he had learned from the young engineer. "Such being the case," he concluded, "there only remains to consider what is to be done."

"It seems obvious," said Marshall. "We'll just take a run up to Seward, get whatever injunctions—or whatever the red tape is—that we require, and come back here with enough officers to put a stop to it."

"That will take at least two weeks," observed Arbuthnot.

"I don't mind that: I'd take two months, if necessary."

"No, you mistake my point. The fact is that in my judgment another two days' work at most will bring the drift into the pocket. If the situation is as detailed in

Maxon's diary—the real Maxon, I mean—the pickings will at once be incredibly rich."

"How much could they take out in a day, do you suppose?" queried X. Anaxagoras.

"I'd hesitate to say. It might be anything in thousands of dollars."

"Let 'em," said Marshall. "They'd have no legal right to it. They couldn't keep it."

"No-o," agreed Arbuthnot, doubtfully.

"Arbuthnot means that they might not have a legal right to it, but that they would most certainly keep it."

"Yes, that's it," agreed the engineer. "They'll take jolly good care to put each day's take where it won't be found."

"They might, if they got suspicious of anything"—This from Marshall.

"They strike me as chaps that are always suspicious—on general principles," said Arbuthnot. "Or at least Maxon is—or whatever is his name. Hate to use a good man's name on a scoundrel."

"*We* call him Eats-'em-alive," put in Betsy. "The other is Fleshpots, though Barker suits him well enough."

Arbuthnot laughed appreciatively.

"Can't you jolly them along—mark time?" asked Marshall. "Stall them until we get back? I don't gather that either of them knows the first thing about the technical end of it."

Arbuthnot made a gesture of vexation.

"That's just it! I had a strong hunch not to tell all I knew. In fact, I knew two days ago, after I'd made up my

calculations for the week's work and checked up with Maxon's diary, that we were fairly on top of things, as you might say; but for some reason something held me off. I started to tell them and didn't. Then I got to calling myself a bally fool, so to-night I told 'em—and only just before I came off to the yacht! They know that two days' work straight ahead will put them in."

"Too bad, but that's that," said X. Anaxagoras, philosophically. "Only, my son, remember this: a first-chop died-in-the-wool hunch is always worth serious consideration. Its other name is intuition, and real intuitions are things that come through us and not merely from us."

"Well, I know one way," next said Marshall, grimly, without attention to his brother-in-law's cosmic philosophy. "We'll just take possession here and put a stop to things on our own hook, until we can get proper authority. I've got eight good husky men who'll stick, and there's we three. That ought to be enough to hold down one fat man and one thin man."

But Arbuthnot shook his head.

"It might be done," he acknowledged, "but not without trouble and considerable risk of bloodshed. There are all told fourteen of them, and they are well armed."

"The Chinks?" cried Marshall, astonished. "Would they fight?"

"The situation, as I hinted to Mr. Tomlinson——" began Arbuthnot, and stopped bewildered at the chuckles that greeted the name.

"Stage name," explained Betsy. "You see, we, too, have been playing parts. Haven't you noticed? Oh, do

tell me you've noticed! I couldn't *bear* it if you hadn't!"

Arbuthnot flushed.

"Well, of course," he stammered "my first impressions——"

He was stopped by another burst of laughter.

"Own up!" cried Betsy, "that you thought you had never seen such 'utter damn fools.' I am not being profane; I am merely quoting the title of the piece."

"As I hinted to Mr. ——" Arbuthnot avoided the point, and hesitated for someone to supply the name. Marshall started to do so.

"X. Anaxagoras," interposed the Healer of Souls, firmly. Then, as Arbuthnot looked a trifle bewildered, he added, "You see, I am Greek—in spirit."

"Quite so," agreed the engineer, somewhat vaguely. "Well, these men are not ordinary coolies; they are north of China men, quite a different breed of cats. They are a fighting race; the sort that make the bandits. And they are armed to a man."

"Don't they take their orders from you?"

"They speak no English. They take their orders only from their headman. They would, I am convinced, obey him implicitly in anything. In fact, there is no doubt in my mind that they were smuggled for the purpose. They would fulfil my orders as far as mining work goes. Beyond that, no."

"Are you certain? Have you any real reason for thinking so?"

Arbuthnot grinned toward X. Anaxagoras.

"It's a hunch," said he.

"And the headman?"

"Hwang Tso. He sits like Buddha, fat and silent, dressed in brocade and jade. I have got no further with him: I know nothing; but—and this again is only a hunch—I place him as the third partner in this enterprise."

A thougthful silence fell.

"A plan might be made, nevertheless," said Marshall at last. "Surprise. I confess we are not well armed—a sporting rifle or two. But for all that we might take them unaware——"

"We might, but it's dangerous. A single slip would ruin things. It would at least give the whole show away. And Hwang Tso is the devil. He just sits, but apparently he knows everything. I don't know, of course; but I'll wager that your men could not leave the yacht—day or night—without his knowing it."

"And the celebrated piece of 'The Utter Damn Fool' has, in his case, failed of its audience," put in Betsy, keenly.

"We can try it," Arbuthnot summed it up, "but if there is any other way, I should advise leaving it alone."

Again they fell silent, reviewing the situation. Marshall after a moment arose and began to pace the cabin. Once or twice one of the others started to speak. "Just wait a moment, please," he muttered. At last he reseated himself.

"This is how I see it," he said, crisply. "We've got to stop this work, and stop it immediately. We haven't the force to do it openly—or at least we won't try that if we can do anything else. The chances of wholesale surprise are agreed to be too risky. But if we work right we ought to

be able to grab off the leaders, and without them the thing will stop."

"You are suggesting?" queried X. Anaxagoras.

"Kidnap 'em," said Marshall, shortly. "Kidnap Maxon and Barker. Keep 'em out of the way until we have time to act."

X. Anaxagoras shot a triumphant glance at Betsy, who sat up straight.

"Do you know you are suggesting a crime, my son?" he inquired, softly.

"Crime? What of it!" snorted Marshall.

Betsy clasped her hands.

"What a pity one of them isn't a real-estate man!" she observed to her brother.

Marshall stared at her a moment, then brushed the remark aside as an idiotic irrelevance.

"You say they take orders from you as to the actual work?" he asked Arbuthnot. "Well, then, here's what we do. We give out that we're going on a fishing expedition over Sunday—that's day after to-morrow—and we invite you all to go. You accept. Any hitch in that? Will they object to your going?"

Arbuthnot considered.

"They might."

"If we invite them all three, I think not. They'll figure they can keep track of things, and it would tip their hand unnecessarily to order you to refuse. They'll figure they'd better play the game as it lies and hope to get rid of us soon. Then, once we have them aboard, we'll keep them here."

"And Hwang Tso? If they don't come back Monday, what's to prevent his going ahead?" pointed out X. Anaxagoras.

"I'm coming to him. Does he know anything about the actual situation underground, do you think?"

"Not from me," said Arbuthnot. "I only told—er—Eats-'em-alive."

"Well, I'm banking on his knowing nothing from Eats-'em-alive. I'll bet Barker doesn't either."

"I think you're right there," agreed Arbuthnot, with growing eagerness.

"All right. When we get them safe aboard, you go ashore and you tell old Buddha that we've decided to go on up to get some contraption you need in the mine or supplies or something and won't be back for a while, and that the work is to stop until we get back, so you can supervise it. Think you can put that over?"

Arbuthnot nodded thoughtfully. "I think so," said he.

"Well, there you are!" cried Marshall, and looked at them in triumph.

"It's a nice little scheme," Betsy interposed at this point, "and you're a bright little brother. But I see one fatal error: you'll never in the wide world induce Eats-'em-alive to go. He'll send Fleshpots to spy, but he'll stay strictly at home."

They stared at her blankly.

"Owing to my unparalleled success in the rôle of fascinating ingénue, I've shattered his nervous system," she added.

Her auditors digested this in a rather dismayed silence for a few moments. X. Anaxagoras sighed.

"Indubitable truth is recognizable by the cosmic satisfaction it conveys," he said at last. "I am forced reluctantly to the conclusion that my sister on this point is eternally right. Eats-'em-alive will not come."

Marshall made a gesture of impatience.

"He'll come," he said, meaningly. "He may not come willingly, but he'll come! You leave that to me!"

"We'll have to be careful," warned Arbuthnot.

"I'll plan it. It ought not to be too difficult. A little elementary strategy and a little strong-arm work. We'll fix it."

"What'll your men think of all this? What can you tell them in explanation?"

"My men will be with us. I shall tell them the truth," replied Marshall, confidently.

"Of course, they'll be technically liable—accessories and all that sort of thing, in case it comes to a showdown."

"I'll explain all that. But they won't mind."

"You seem very certain. I don't know. I wish we could pull it off without them. One hint from any of them would upset the whole apple cart."

"Don't give yourself a moment's concern about them."

"You see," put in X. Anaxagoras, "there has been an episode of a spotty cow which has placed the whole ship's company in what might be called psychological rapport."

Arbuthnot did not try to fathom this; merely accepting the face value of the assurance.

"Well," he conceded, "we'll try out the fishing-trip idea, and we'll hope for the best. Once Barker is aboard peacefully, we'll do our best to get the other."

"How about Hwang Tso?" asked Betsy, thoughtfully. "If he should go ahead with the work while we are gone?"

"I think that is all right," Arbuthnot assured her. "I doubt if he knows details of the work or the hopes for it. He will receive orders, and it would not occur to him to jeopardize future relations by disobeying them."

"Then it's all settled," said X. Anaxagoras, "and there lacks only one thing."

"What is that?"

"A moving-picture camera," he replied.

But Marshall leaned eagerly forward, the light of inspiration in his eyes.

"Look here!" he cried, "why not go on with it? After we put the kibosh on this nefarious raid, why not go ahead with the work and get the loot—and turn it over to Mrs. Maxon? She need not know about it until it is all done; and nothing is disturbed over there; and the preparatory work is all finished. I say, that's what I call a fine idea!"

"Glorious!" agreed Betsy, enthusiastically.

"Top hole!" chimed in Arbuthnot.

X. Anaxagoras shook his head.

"You forget, my son, that however nefarious the designs of our sweet-tempered friend, and however completely circumstances seem to prove them, nevertheless, after all the smoke has cleared away, these works do undoubtedly belong to him. He hasn't really stolen anything yet. I don't know if what he has already done is a crime or not, but I shrewdly surmise that it amounts merely to trespass or some other civil ground for action. And when the said

smoke does clear away, if we are discovered occupying his property, we shall be liable to trespass ourselves."

But Marshall was still in the full tide of inspiration.

"Why are you so sure it belongs to him?" he demanded. "Listen here! Isn't it more likely, since the whole thing is a raid, that they merely came here and started to work without taking over the land from the Government? They wouldn't want to file on it, even under assumed names. They might be traced, and it might attract attention to the district, and anyway, what would they *gain* by it?"

"By Jove, Jerry, you've hit it!" cried X. Anaxagoras, bringing his fist down on the table with a thump.

"And if that's the case," swept on Marshall, his eyes shining, "what's to prevent *our* filing on the land and just calmly taking over the whole show?"

Betsy jumped to her feet and ran around the table to imprint a kiss on her husband's brow.

"Jerry," she said, solemnly, "you are a genius!"

"I shall write a letter to Mrs. Maxon," outlined X. Anaxagoras, rapidly, "and Arbuthnot shall deliver it in person. She will, I think, do in this matter as I advise. Arbuthnot can explain the whole situation. Once convinced that neither will she be bothered with the matter nor will the country be disturbed, she will consent. I shall see to that."

"How can you be so certain?" asked Betsy, doubtfully, "in view of what you have told us of her."

"I will see to that," repeated X. Anaxagoras, with a quiet emphasis. "You will find that she will read the letter and will listen to Arbuthnot." He spoke with an authority

that could not be doubted. And for the briefest possible instant there seemed to be a pause in the rush of the crowded minutes, and something of the old dignity and mystery that had always attached to one phase of the complex personality that called itself the Healer of Souls struck across the spirits of those present. It was only during an instant, however, for X. Anaxagoras went on at once, "I have a certain influence with her which circumstances have given to me alone, but which I have heretofore been chary of spending because the practical application has lacked. But I myself think," he went on, his voice slightly raised, "that you will be an awful ass not to dig some worms before you go. Sometimes these trout are deucedly silly, you know, about takin' a fly; and if you really want fish, you must give the dear things what they want, eh, what?"

Deliberately he produced from his breast pocket the forgotten monocle, screwed it into his eye, and looked blandly from one to the other of their astounded faces.

"Come aboard, Mr. Barker, do!" he called. "We were just plannin' a fishin' picnic, and we want you to go."

CHAPTER XXII

TEN minutes later the two visitors left together, Barker with a drink under his belt. They stepped ashore and beached their boats and walked in silence together up to the point where their paths diverged to their various dwellings.

"Nice people," then said Barker.

"They've got some good fishing tackle," said Arbuthnot.

"Good company," suggested Barker.

"If you like that kind," assented Arbuthnot, indifferently. He made a wry face at himself in the darkness and felt a vast desire to swing just one on his companion's fat face, for even this implied disparagement of those who had been his hosts went against the grain. But he realized he must play the game.

Barker wished him a good-night and thoughtfully approached the veranda where the glow of a cigar end marked the presence of his partner awaiting his report.

"Well?" growled the latter, when the fat one had clambered up the steps and with a sigh had sunk into a chair.

"They were talking fishing fifteen to the dozen," replied Barker, in a low tone. He had discarded his customary joviality and spoke conversationally. "They're all fish crazy. There's no harm in that lot. They're planning going fishing somewhere in the yacht over Sunday. They want us all to go."

"Did they say when they were going to get out of here?"

"I gathered they'd bring us back and then pull out."

"The less we see of them the better. And I don't want Arbuthnot running around with them. I don't like it."

"Well, Sunday will finish it."

"I don't like him off with them all day Sunday. You can't tell what might slip out. It's taking a chance."

"I don't know how you can help it, R. K. They've got it all fixed, and Arbuthnot's been crazy on this fish business ever since we've been here."

"He's in my employ, isn't he?" growled Eats-'em-alive. "Why should I let him neglect the work to go on picnics?"

"It's Sunday, you know."

"Well, after what he told us to-day there's a good excuse for working Sunday. I think I'll just issue orders."

"Of course, you can do that," agreed Barker, doubtfully, "but I wouldn't if I were you. It'll just make him ugly. And it might make him suspicious. Better let it alone."

Eats-'em-alive uttered a few choice apostrophes of the fate that had inflicted him with tourists at this critical point. Barker made no further comment. After the fireworks were over, Eats-'em-alive grumblingly admitted that for once his companion might be right, and that it would be better to let matters take their course.

"But I want you to be on hand every second of the time," he warned. "No monkey business. Keep your eyes open. I don't like it."

"All right, R. K., it's all one to me," replied Barker. He grinned. "I'd just as leave drink aboard as stay ashore. I told them I'd invite you, too. Want to go?"

"Want to go!" snorted the other. "You couldn't hire me to go, and you know it. Don't *you* begin to ask fool questions!"

"Nevertheless," submitted Barker, "I think it wouldn't be a bad idea. You haven't called on them yet. It would look more natural if you'd preserve the amenities."

At this hint of insistence Eats-'em-alive exploded.

"I—will—*not*—go! Just fix that in your head. There are limits to what I can stand, let me tell you that, young fellow!"

"But don't you think——"

If Barker's ideas of what his companion thought were at all indefinite that quality was eliminated by the latter's reply. By means of emphatic and contemptuous epithets which possessed the amplifying richness and variety of a page of Roget's Thesaurus he set forth his opinion of fishermen, fish, sports, yachts, tourists, and the whole blasted, pestiferous round of their activities. Only this would have had to be a privately printed Roget for circulation solely among the robust and hardened. When he had finished all doubt must have been removed from Barker's mind.

"All right," he agreed, resignedly, "I'll go out in the morning and tell them. But I don't know what they'll think."

"Think!" roared Eats-'em-alive; then, at Barker's warning gesture, he lowered his voice almost to a whisper, which, however, did nothing to deprive his remarks of emphasis, "Think!" he repeated, in this altered tone, "I don't care what they think. They'd better stay away from me or I *will* tell 'em what I think; the interfering jackasses, butting

in and jeopardizing all we've got at stake here! *Why* should I be aggravated listening to their asinine chatter, tell me that? It's bad enough to *see* them, let alone trailing around with them. God knows, I'm a reasonable man, but that's one thing I won't do. That's your job. You're fitted for it," he said, with a sneer. "Fix it up to suit yourself. That's the way it is, and that's the way it's going to stay. This is your job, not mine, Go to it!" He threw away his cigar and stamped into the house.

The foregoing interview has been so closely detailed in order that one may admire the translation rendered the following morning by Barker when he rowed off to the *Spindrift*. He delivered his partner's regrets to Betsy, whom he found to be the sole occupant of the deck. X. Anaxagoras and Marshall were, as a matter of fact, in the forecastle, where were gathered every last member of the ship's company, including Plutarch and the Ram. As Roggsy and Noah had also followed, through a natural curiosity, the tale was complete. Marshall was unfolding to this group of respectable American mariners reprehensible proposals of piracy and kidnapping, with due warnings of possible penalties and liabilities; which former were being accepted with every symptom of joyful acquiescence, and the latter totally disregarded.

Mr. Maxon, Barker told his hostess, was really disappointed, but some work had come up in connection with the mine which made it quite impossible for him to leave. He was therefore forced to deprive himself of a great pleasure.

Betsy received this statement with a vivacious high-handedness.

"What nonsense!" she cried. "Of course he can come if he wants to. You tell him for me that I shall think he doesn't *want* to come. I won't hear of it. He's got to come!"

Barker laboured five minutes to emphasize the point. He talked against a rush of words, most of which seemed to indicate that his charmer was not hearing what he said, and if she did hear, was paying but slight attention to its import. It was a perfect example of the preoccupation of imbecility with its own self-centres. He perspired mildly on his conical bald head, but at last he got it over. Betsy sat up straight and held up one dainty finger.

"Very well," she said, severely, "but you go straight back and tell him this for me. I insist that at least he come aboard before we start and drink with me to the success of the mine. He hasn't set foot on the yacht since we came in, and I shall feel hurt if he doesn't."

Barker privately considered this an admirable compromise, but his thick hide was still stinging from the effect of his partner's sneers, so he stiffened his spirit to convey his certainty that Eats-'em-alive could not possibly get away even for so brief a call.

"Perhaps when we get back," he suggested.

"You tell him he must," insisted Betsy. "I've set my heart on it and I'm used to having my own way. If he won't come on the picnic with us, he must come out when you do and come aboard for a few minutes. He can take that much time from his precious business, and you needn't tell me he can't. And if he doesn't"—Betsy's manner became serious with the deadly seriousness of the spoilt

woman—"I'll most certainly stay right here in port until he does! I'll go ashore myself and bring him! You tell him that from me. And if he tries to hide in his old mine, I'll go down and *get* him! So he might just as well make up his mind to do as I say. And I mean what I say, too!"

She sat back with the air of a matter triumphantly disposed of.

Barker eyed her with alarm. He knew women, and he knew that she would do exactly as she said. He experienced the aggrieved resentment probably felt by the grain of wheat which considers it really has nothing to do with upper and nether millstones, but he departed, resigned to the fact that, all things considered, he would better deliver the message verbatim even if it were sure to be all his fault.

Betsy watched his disconsolate, dumpy figure droop its way toward the "place where the lightnings are made." A twinkle of deep amusement lighted her face. Then she arose and went forward to the forecastle hatch.

"Oh, Jerry," she called, sweetly, across the murmur of voices, which instantly stilled. "I am sorry to simplify so delightfully plotty a situation, but you conspirators can put away your black masks. Eats-'em-alive is coming."

"What?" came back Marshall's voice after an incredulous interval. "Coming? Willingly?"

"I didn't say willingly," replied Betsy, "but he's coming, and of his own accord."

Marshall's astonished face rose up the companion to a level with her own.

"How does that happen?" he demanded.

"My secret," simpered Betsy. "He has been unable to

resist my feminine charm. Men are so brutal and stupid in their methods. When it comes to the really delicate and subtle, women are *so* much better!"

She fluffed her hair affectedly and gave an approving polish to her nails in exaggeration of the manner she had been using with Barker. Marshall stared at her.

"You make me sick!" he exclaimed, vehemently.

"Fie! fie!" chided Betsy. "Jerry, I don't know you. You're getting rude to your little wife!"

"Oh, look here, Betsy," he pleaded, "for God's sake cut it! You've done that stuff so much I'm getting scared. You throw me into a cold perspiration after you've done it awhile. My God!" he exclaimed, fervently, "it must be hell to be tied to a woman like that!"

"Well," said Betsy, dropping her rôle. "It's wearing on me, too. But go below and tell your little playmates it's all fixed. And you might modestly convey my opinion that I'm a wonder."

CHAPTER XXIII

EATS–'EM–ALIVE came, but he came with just about that degree of geniality and kindly feeling as inspired a pirate of old boarding a ship, determined to kill without quarter. And the hour was distinctly early, for the river which was to be their objective was ten or twelve miles up the coast. Benton was supposed to have the local knowledge in regard to that river, though as a matter of fact it was X. Anaxagoras who knew about it. The group on the yacht's deck watched the approach with considerable amusement and some relief. Though Betsy had been positive she had turned the trick, the others were not so certain, and an elaborate and desperate plan for an attempt at abduction had been perfected and the men instructed, in case he did not come.

"The festive undertaker," Betsy characterized their principal guest. "He'd be perfect in the part. I've not seen a glimmer yet. I'll make him smile yet if it cracks his face!"

"Poor little Fleshpots is the fellow who's going to have the rough time!" commented Marshall.

Arbuthnot, who handled the oars, was grave and imperturbable, though he tendered Betsy the barest flicker of a wink as they came alongside.

An air of suppressed excitement pervaded the yacht, for

now every soul aboard her knew what was afoot. Roggsy did not know, but he quite perfectly got the atmosphere, and he was engaged in what his master called skyhooting. Rogg himself, together with another of the men, named Pierce, and who also was possessed of enormous strength, received the small boat alongside. They continued to linger near the group, and after the latter had gone below they took their stations within call either side the companionway. It was felt that once the victims were aboard no chances were to be taken. They fervently though secretly hoped there would be a row.

Barker's red face was smeared with smiles, and his aura of joviality was winking, though evidently under a forced draught.

"Hullo! Hullo!" he hailed them. "Here we are! You see your message did the work, Mrs. Marshall! Triumph for your fair charms! He hadn't the power to resist!"

Truth to tell it looked for a brief instant as though the lost power might be restored at the last instant, but Eats-'em-alive finally climbed to the deck and stood grumpily waiting. Fleshpots scrambled as agilely after him as was possible for one of his model, for he knew the lubrication of his social manner would be instantly and most urgently required. Arbuthnot began leisurely to ship his oars.

But before he could follow the others Betsy rushed animatedly to the rail. Betsy, from the moment the foot of Eats-'em-alive had touched the deck, had filled the entire circumambient atmosphere to an approximate radius of, say, a hundred feet, with clamant but empty vivacity.

She exclaimed over the pleasure and the honour, she voiced lamentations that he was not going along, she conveyed arch reproof at his obduracy, she deluged him with solicitude over his insistence on working so hard. Eats-'em-alive had not space to insert even a growl. All he could do was to lay back his ears and plant all four feet. Or, to change the figure, he could not face the hose-like deluge: he had to hump his back and shut his eyes. Then, abruptly, the stream was turned off, and Betsy was at the side of the boat.

"Oh, Mr. Arbuthnot," she trilled, "I wonder if you could do something for me? I'm *so* stupid! But I'm afraid when I went ashore yesterday to exercise Roggsy that I left my red sunshade. And I'm going to need it *so* much. I *think* I left it somewhere on the beach. If you could——"

"I think I saw it by the cook house, Mrs. Marshall," returned Arbuthnot, promptly. "I meant to bring it. It's a pleasure."

Eats-'em-alive came gasping to the surface and grasped at a straw.

"Hey, young man!" he called. "Just wait a minute. You can take me ashore."

"Why, Mr. Maxon!" cried Betsy, reproachfully. "You're not going ashore for *at least* a half hour! They have to do all sorts of things yet to the yacht. You act as though you didn't really *want* to stay."

"And besides, old chap," cut in Marshall, "how's Arbuthnot to come off again, eh, what?" He laughed vacantly. "Had you there, old man!"

"And now!" cried Betsy. "We'll all go below and drink to the mine!"

They descended the companionway, in decorous enough order, and yet a very moderate imagination would have had slight difficulty in sensing a psychological bustling as though a large reluctant body were being gently but firmly herded along. The deck was left clear, except for Rogg and Pierce near the companionway, and the members of the crew springing swiftly but in cautious silence to their tasks. Rogg looked at Pierce and Pierce looked at Rogg.

"She's a wonder," said Pierce, cautiously, thus voicing spontaneously the opinion Betsy had requested Marshall to convey to the crew. Pierce, like the others, knew his mistress with the thoroughness of a year's voyaging on the same ship. "Hope the old boys make a dust-up. I'd like to take just one crack at old hatchet face; he looks mean. Other one's not so bad, though. What do you make of him?"

Rogg tiptoed to the side of the yacht and spat overside; then he tiptoed back.

"Him?" he considered. "Well," he stated, judicially, "he's considerable down by the stern."

Arbuthnot rowed rapidly ashore, beached his boat, and walked up to the cook shack, which he entered. Hwang Tso, seated in his straight chair near the window, looked at him without turning his head. Hwang Tso was heavy and square and his round yellow face had no expression and his small black eyes looked dead, as though consciousness had been withdrawn to some point far behind them. He wore a hard round skullcap with a red-coral button atop, and a wadded brocaded jacket of dark blue beneath which showed a thinner brocaded jacket of lilac, and lilac pantaloons tied

close about his ankles with white tape. His hands were surprisingly long and slender for one so obese, and the pointed nails extended fully an inch beyond the ends of his fingers. On a low table at his right lay a Chinese smoking apparatus, and on a spirit lamp at his left was a small copper kettle for tea. Arbuthnot had never seen him other than thus since the whole crew had some months before come down the coast in boats. Here he sat all day long, bolt upright, his feet parallel side by side. Quite motionless he sat except that at rare intervals his hand stretched out for the pipe or the tea. Then the brocaded sleeve fell back slightly, and two polished bracelets of green jade tinkled slightly one against the other.

Arbuthnot approached him.

"Hwang Tso," said he, briefly, "now we go. I think mebbe-so we not come back one week, mebbe two week. You belong sit quiet. Men no work."

Hwang Tso surveyed him in silence for an interval.

"What for you go?" he asked, at length.

"Must have powder. No powder, no can work."

The Chinaman again permitted an interval of silence.

"What for more powdy? Plenty powdy," then said he.

"Powder he get wet," stated Arbuthnot; who had, parenthetically, himself attended to that detail. "No good."

Hwang Tso stared at him for twenty seconds without the slightest expression, but somehow a miasma of deep hidden curiosity or suspicion slowly filled the air.

"Missa Maxon he go, too?" asked Hwang Tso.

"Yes, he go, too. All go."

The miasma seemed to thin and dissipate.

"All light," said Hwang Tso. "We wait."

Arbuthnot picked up the red sunshade, which he had himself placed in the cook house the evening before, and departed, secretly lightened by a decided relief. Aboard the yacht he found Marshall awaiting him on deck. He nodded reassurance to the young man, who immediately went forward. Below deck the engines were already softly humming, and bursts of chatter—mostly from Betsy, with an occasional Barker bellow—came from the after cabin. He did not move to join them. Men forward softly threw a hawser overboard attached to a buoy: Marshall had decided not to attract undue attention by the racket of an anchor chain, and was leaving the anchor in place. The *Spindrift* slowly turned on her heel and glided toward the narrow opening to the lagoon. Rogg and Pierce exchanged a glance of disappointment.

CHAPTER XXIV

IN THE meantime, below decks had been enacted a scene which any moron would have described as one of lightsome and carefree merriment. That is because the average moron has no spiritual antennæ whatever and gains all his impressions solely from that which meets the eye. He would have seen a charming and vivacious, though perhaps excessively talkative, young woman eagerly dispensing hospitality and light persiflage; and an amiable, good-looking, though undeniably somewhat boneheaded young man making remarks whose utter vacuity was redeemed by their obvious well meaning; and another young man who looked a good deal of a silly ass in a monocle and who, like most silly asses, had little to say; and a jolly fat man who was undoubtedly a Shriner or a Camel, or something like that, and who was therefore—both in virtue of his physical make-up and his fraternal affiliations—a judge of good liquor, which judgment he was putting to practical test; and one who must be entitled to full consideration because the others all seemed to revolve about him while he remained both taciturn and grumpy—a millionaire at least. But his five senses would not have been adequate to report to him several other things. Such as, to instance one example only, that the little fat man was drinking less out of a desire for enjoyment than to calm his nerves. Indeed, our

average moron would never have been able to realize that the little fat man had any nerves.

From time to time Eats-'em-alive attempted, without marked success, to get in a word edgewise. His remarks invariably had to do with the extreme desirability of his instant departure.

"Isn't that your engine going?" he cut in at one time. "I mustn't be keeping you, if you're ready to go."

"Oh, we're not ready to go," disclaimed Betsy. "They always run that thing ages before they're ready. They have to warm it up, or something. When they're really ready you'll hear the anchor chain rattle."

It was at this point that Marshall went on deck, making some vague excuse of "seeing about it."

But this idyllic scene could not in the nature of things last for ever. Eats-'em-alive happened to glance out of the porthole and the phenomenon of trees moving past engaged his attention. He leaped to his feet.

"What's this? We're moving!" he roared, and he cast about him a baleful glance.

Betsy, unabashed, clapped her hands in childish glee.

"Now you can't help yourself!" she crowed. "You'll have to go with us whether you want to or not! It'll be such fun!"

Eats-'em-alive leaped toward the companionway, and for a moment it looked as though Rogg and Pierce might realize a hope after all. Then he turned fiercely on X. Anaxagoras.

"I demand to be placed on shore at once—*at once*, do you hear?" he thundered.

But X. Anaxagoras merely mounted his monocle and waved a languid hand.

"She's set her heart on your going," he drawled. "She's a jolly practical joker."

"This is an outrage!" snorted the older man, again turning to the companionway. But Betsy was in his way. She took the lapels of his coat in her two hands and looked up into his scowling visage coaxingly.

"Just to please me!" she cooed. "It's only for a day, and your horrid old work isn't as important as all that! Nobody's waiting for you back there; they're all here. If you don't sit down and act like a nice man, I shall really begin to think you don't *want* to go!"

At this last X. Anaxagoras gave vent to a queer gurgle which terminated in a cough. Eats-'em-alive looked vindictively over Betsy's shoulder at a very miserable Barker, whom he evidently suspected of complicity. The latter frantically made grimaces intended to convey his ignorance and innocence, and also an appeal to make the best of the situation without raising a suspicious row. This mixture was too complicated for the means of communication and resulted merely in a resemblance to guilt.

Betsy took advantage of his instant's hesitation to force him gently into a chair.

"There!" she cried, triumphantly. "And you're going to thank me for making you take a nice little vacation. It was my very own idea to kidnap you this way in spite of yourself, and I think it was very clever. You wouldn't go any other way, so I had to use persuasion. You must forget all your cares now and have a jolly time with the rest.

No, you needn't glance at poor Mr. Barker; he didn't know a thing about it, it was entirely my idea." Fleshpots cast a grateful glance at her. He had lost his ruddy cheer momentarily. "That's right," Betsy chattered on, "light your cigar and be comfy. We're going to have just a lovely time, and you'll do all the better work to-morrow for a nice rest. And I'm going to just devote myself all day to you as a reward."

At this last X. Anaxagoras arose hastily and went on deck. Fleshpots cast about him a look of alarm over the thinning insulation between himself and his outraged chief, and scuttled after. Betsy was left alone with full opportunity to fulfil her charitable promise.

CHAPTER XXV

THE *Spindrift* was in a hurry and the winds were light, so she ran all the way to her destination under power, arriving in a little less than two hours' time. Turning from the coast into a wide arm of the sea from the borders of which arose high mountains heavily forested and crowned with snow, she proceeded toward a head where the highlands seemed to draw rather grudgingly apart to give room to a long, deep valley, and where, from the distance, appeared a low strip of vivid green. This, as the yacht approached, turned out to be marsh grass, outlying for the distance of a half mile or so from the shore through which could be discerned the silver glimmer of water marking lagoons and estuaries. Beyond it a dark cleft in the forest indicated where the river must emerge.

"There are often bear to be seen on flats like that," observed X. Anaxagoras to Arbuthnot. He lowered the glasses through which he had been peering. "Don't see any to-day, though."

The *Spindrift* crept in cautiously, the leadsman busy. Finally, twelve fathoms was reported, and Marshall instantly ordered the hook down.

"Seems pretty deep to you, I suppose," observed Marshall to the young engineer, "but these rivers throw out wide silt flats, and mostly you're in deep water or none at all."

The yacht swung for a moment or so, then pointed her nose toward the distant river mouth, although the light breeze was blowing directly up the arm.

"You'd find the water overside quite brackish, especially at low tide," remarked X. Anaxagoras.

The basin was a cup of essential silence guarded austerely by the towering mountains and the dark forest; but a silence in which were permitted such iridescent gleams of sounds as should not endanger its purity. Thus on the forested shore near at hand to the right a raven uttered spaced harsh croaks, and a song sparrow in the fringing salmonberry brush sang his cheerful song of little things; while from the more distant tide flats arose an uninterrupted conversational screaming and chattering of waterfowl discoursing with vulgar volubility of broad jokes and little fishes. Nor did movement lack, for the breeze waves hurried by against the current waves; and the sea birds wheeled and rose and spattered and went visiting. Nevertheless, one had only to raise one's eyes to realize that here was the home of the absolute of silence and of rest.

The crew of the *Spindrift* under Benton's direction were getting the small boats overside. From below emerged Betsy and her victim. Betsy babbled as vivaciously as ever but Eats-'em-alive appeared to be both depressed and exhausted. He called Barker aside, but so much of his truculence had dissipated that little Fleshpots obeyed the summons with less trepidation than he would have felt an hour before.

"Good heavens!" breathed Betsy, explosively, to the others, "I'm all worn out! You lazy spalpeens, to desert

me so! I never worked so hard in my life. He's absolutely enveloped in a cloud of blue gas. I couldn't see him half the time for the awful aura he throws out. Surely our Mahatma must have recognized its poisonous emanations!"

"I don't see why you bore yourself," said Marshall. "We've got them; now we'll keep them whether they like it or not."

"That, of course, is the nice, simple, direct masculine way of doing things," assented Betsy, "but in the first place I have no desire whatever to keep them; in the second place, there's no sense in putting ourselves officially in the wrong; in the third place, we have about two weeks of it coming and we might as well have some fun; and in the last place it isn't artistic."

"What do you propose?" asked Marshall.

Betsy spoke rapidly for some moments, interrupted only by appreciative chuckles.

"I wish I might be here to see," said Arbuthnot, regretfully.

"Unless I'm mistaken, it may be difficult to separate our friends from Arbuthnot without strong-arm methods," Marshall pointed out. "I fancy Eats-'em-alive intends to see to it that our interims apart are few and far between. We wouldn't get these words in edgewise if he hadn't forgotten everything else in his desire to give Fleshpots particular hell for getting him into this mess." He glanced humorously toward the taffrail where the vehement manner of the one and the dejected attitude of the other went far to bear out his surmise.

"I've fixed that," said Betsy, confidently. "What do

you think I've been working for for the past two hours? Fun? Or the savage desire of torture? No: I shall announce that I am going to have Mr. Arbuthnot in the same boat with me; and I'll guarantee Eats-'em-alive would rather swim than go along."

"How about Fleshpots, then?"

"Fleshpots!" rejoined Betsy, scornfully. "I'll manage him."

"Look out: they're coming," warned X. Anaxagoras.

Betsy made her dispositions. She and Arbuthnot and X. Anaxagoras were to go in one boat, together with Eats-'em-alive. Eats-'em-alive resigned his place in favour of Fleshpots. The latter was fond of fishing; he was not. He thought he'd stay aboard and smoke. Vetoed. Mr. Arbuthnot, too, was fond of fishing, and two enthusiasts to a boat were too many.

"I'll tell you!" cried Betsy. "If you don't care to fish, suppose you and Mr. Barker go together, and I'll have one of the men row you. That's just the thing! And we'll meet soon for the picnic, anyway; but I know these fishermen, they've got to have a chance to try their luck first! Or I'll row you myself, and we'll let the man row Mr. Barker."

Eats-'em-alive, with an alacrity that was scarcely flattering and an obvious repression that was murderous, chose the former idea.

"We'll put Mr. Arbuthnot in the kicker because he's the one the party is given for," Betsy planned on. "Rogg will row Mr. Maxon and Mr. Barker in the dinghy. That leaves the cutter for Jerry and my brother. They can bring up the lunch and things."

So it was arranged, and so carried out. The dinghy was dispatched first, because the kicker had to be installed and the lunch loaded into the cutter.

"Now," X. Anaxagoras instructed the young engineer, as soon as the disgruntled two were well away, "I think everything is set. You have the letter to Mrs. Maxon. The kicker will take you to the Kinsey Landing cannery which is only about five miles north, and you can hire a gas boat to put you aboard the Alaska steamer for Seattle late this afternoon. You can file on the property while you are out. I think you ought to get through pretty promptly: and you can probably get the return steamer back. In that case, you ought to be back in ten days' time. I don't know where the nearest regular steamer stop is from here, but you can find out, and hire a gas boat to bring you here. We'll be waiting. Here's some spare cash to start on until you can cash this check."

Arbuthnot stared at the bit of paper.

"I say," he remarked, "this is a pretty stiff amount."

"More than you need, I dare say; but you may have to make some sort of deposit on the land. I don't know much about such things. If there's likely to be delay or red tape, go to Aikens & Brownell; they'll attend to it."

Arbuthnot looked a trifle embarrassed and a little shy.

"I say," he blurted out at last, "do you know I appreciate this. For all you know, I might simply take this and flit."

"Nonsense, my dear fellow!" rejoined X. Anaxagoras, emphatically. "We know a man when we see him."

Arbuthnot folded the check and put it in his inside pocket.

"In ten days—if possible," he said, simply. "Good-bye."

"And good luck," added Marshall.

Arbuthnot stepped overside into the boat. Betsy followed him.

"You know I'm supposed to be with you," she reminded him, "I think I'd like the trip to Kinsey Landing and back."

X. Anaxagoras glanced at his wrist watch.

"You can make it and back by lunch time," said he. "You'll find us in the first bayou, about a mile up river. By the way, how explain the absence of our friend here?"

"Why explain?" asked Marshall, impatiently. "Let them lump it."

"How direct!" murmured Betsy, "and brutal, and inartistic! You leave that to me."

The kicker moved away. They waved their hands to each other. "What devilment is she up to now!" speculated Marshall.

CHAPTER XXVI

AFTER a row of a short half mile from the anchorage the marsh grasses begin. They grow on what is at low tide solid land, but which the flood tide turns into a waving field of green beneath which is a glint of blue water. Channels lead in all directions, widening sometimes to small ponds, or narrowing to tiny creek-like passages. They twist and meander and merge and separate again, so that unless one is wise in the detecting of currents, one wanders up many blind alleys and must return. When the high tide has banked up the water, one has not even this guide, so that one gropes as in a maze. The green grass waves above one's head, and over it one sees merely the distant forest trees and the mountains. One is shut into an intimate marshy world along with wild fowl that tower with a rush of wings when surprised, and with croak-voiced bitterns, and with marsh wrens that seem busiest when upside down.

Nevertheless, if one keeps a general direction, one finds that at length the various channels tend to converge, to unite. The current develops small eddies of a hushed secretive character. Along the banks grow willows and aspens, at first scattered and spaced, gradually drawing closer together, at last forming a bordering thicket. The marsh grasses have been left behind.

At this point, usually, one is taken in charge by a noisy kingfisher, who keeps just ahead, waiting on an outjutting dead branch at each bend, and rattling vigorously his watchman's alarm that all the world of furtive folk may know a stranger comes. Not that any one seems to pay a lot of attention to him, unless it might be such people as the deer or bear. Certainly, the winter wrens and the hermit thrushes continue to transmute into song that which the forest shadows guard. And in the smooth eddies the great blue heron, standing like a figure on a Japanese screen, diverts no iota of his intentness to inquire what the row is about.

Here the forest and the river together come softly down to the sea. The current is broad and smooth, stealing swiftly and quietly down as though to a surprise, saying nothing except in an occasional whisper to a stooping fir branch that dips, or an undertone of delightful chuckle where it parts about a snag or hurries by a point. Here, too, the forest and the river have made friends after the tumultuous and shouting warfare of the upper reaches. The trees come down confidently to the water's edge, leaning out to look at their reflections, dipping their old gnarled roots. To the very surface of the water comes the forest, confident in the peace here consummated. Gone is the no man's land between the two, of ugly boulders, and shingle bars, and the wide stark wrack of flood. Broad-leaved devil's club, like tall lush tropical ferns, and saxifrage, and salmonberry; red elderberries and thimbleberries, dogwood, and aspen crowd through the tall and stately ranks of their elders to gather in a gracious multitude of little peoples un-

afraid where the water meets the land. They lean far out, and lave their feet, and dip and sway, sporting with the polished currents. And, in turn, the river ventures into the forest, so that beneath the green one can peer into mysterious bayous, dripping and still and twilit, where perhaps a lurking mother duck, with her brood gathered close and quiet about her, watches with bright eyes, hoping you may pass unobserving.

Rogg rowed the dinghy with long, powerful strokes, making way against the current. His passengers sat glum and silent. They had no eyes for all the things we have been describing, nor is it to be presumed did they even see the depths of green shadow between the tall, still trees, nor the blueness of the bits of sky, nor the dazzling gleam of high mountains glimpsed through rare openings. Trout occasionally made rings at the edge of silver eddies, and from time to time a great salmon rejoicing on his way to the spawning beds rushed upward with a mighty swirl and splash. As a presumably enthusiastic fisherman Fleshpots appeared to be strangely indifferent to these phenomena. If he entertained any of the softer feelings at all, they were undoubtedly ones of fervent gratitude at the presence of Rogg, which prevented his companion from giving vocal expression to his own feelings, obviously not at all of the softer variety.

The dinghy proceeded methodically for nearly a mile. The current became faster until Rogg was forced to hug the concave shore in order to make progress, pulling lustily across stream whenever he had rounded a point. The river had begun to chuckle and murmur in a low voice as though delighted at some secret it was hurrying to impart. Finally,

with a dozen strong strokes of the oars, Rogg came to rest in the back eddy below a small island.

"Here's a good place, sir," he proffered.

Eats-'em-alive looked sardonically at his companion.

"You're the fisherman," he pointed out, with a sneer. "Get busy."

He lighted a cigar and leaned back as though washing his hands of the whole business.

Fleshpots began reluctantly to assemble his tackle, jointing the rod, threading the line.

"Beg your pardon, sir, but haven't you got the reel on upside down?" inquired Rogg.

Fleshpots silently unthreaded and reversed the reel. He then proceeded to tie on a leader. It proved to be unexpectedly diabolical in the matter of kinking back on itself and catching on everything within its reach. Fleshpot's fingers were all thumbs. The knot he used was an improvisation. Rogg appeared to find it most interesting. He said nothing, but his obviously awakening curiosity, combined with Eats-'em-alive's fiercely contemptuous detachment, produced an atmosphere which Fleshpots found trying. The flies possessed loops; so did the leader. Fleshpots concealed his highly original method of combining these irreconcilable circles by turning his back.

"I'd cast down just where the two currents come together, sir," advised Rogg.

Fleshpots attempted to do so by waving the rod in that direction. The line twisted and snarled into a cat's-cradle effect and fell with a splash about ten feet from the boat. Fleshpots muttered something, hauled it in, and disen-

tangled it. Rogg stepped ashore, tied the painter to a rock, and sat down at a considerable distance. The wisdom of his procedure became evident when Fleshpots in his next attempt managed to accomplish a back cast which swept devastatingly a wide area and ended by imbedding firmly one of the flies in the broad of the fisherman's own back.

Rogg approached and extricated the hook. Fleshpots looked red and flustered. Eats-'em-alive, coming to a belated realization that he was within a dangerous zone of fire, arose.

"If you'll just let me by, I'll go ashore and give you room," he remarked, sarcastically. "You need it."

But Rogg was a kindly soul. He had been led to consider these men as a sort of human rattlesnake, but he found it within him to be sorry even for a rattlesnake when not rattling, at least for the fat rattlesnake. After extricating the hook from Fleshpot's coat he had a suggestion to make.

"I think, sir," said he, "that perhaps I can find some grubs in some of these old logs."

He puzzled for a moment over Fleshpot's fly-tying methods, then gave it up and tied on a fresh leader to which he attached a bait hook.

"Just let that drop down the current, like," he advised, after providing the hook with the promised grub.

Fleshpots did so. A trout engulfed the grub. Left to himself, Fleshpots would probably have attempted to heave the whole outfit over his shoulder into the brush—a procedure which he recalled from a dimly recollected boyhood, but which might have proved complicated with a six-ounce

rod. Rogg, however, stood at his elbow and advised, so that in due time the fish was triumphantly netted. Fleshpots began to experience a certain uplift of the spirits, born partly of the stirrings of a primitive sportsmanship and partly of a feeling that the feat was a direct refutation of the malignant sneer on the face of the spectator on the beach. He discovered a kindly feeling for the simple sailor man, which was directly balanced by a suddenly discovered active antagonism for his partner. He'd show him! As for Rogg, it is regretfully to be recorded that his own motives were mixed. Partly, he was, in his kindly way, sorry for this futile little fat man; but mainly he, too, was secretly delighted to thwart the manifest satisfaction of the thin guy. Not that Rogg analysed this: he was a simple soul.

So Rogg and Fleshpots had a good time, and Fleshpots lived in the moment, and the two got to be quite chummy, while Eats-'em-alive was left to poison himself with his disposition, which he did quite thoroughly.

About noon the cutter with X. Anaxagoras and Marshall appeared, working against the current. They drew up in the back eddy. Fleshpots, at sight of them, had hastily reeled in, so that, by the time they had approached, no evidences of the crime were visible—only the trophies.

"Hullo," commented the Healer of Souls. "Pretty good, eh, what? Congratulations! Now," he proposed, "let's find a good place for the picnic."

They embarked in the small boats and pulled up the river a short distance, and so shortly came to a wider bayou than the ordinary, into which they turned. The water there was, of course, still and smooth. They landed among

tall trees on a little out-jutting flat, where there was no brush or bracken, and only a soft carpet of green moss. It was like a miniature clearing, with the denser forest behind. The bayou lay in front like a little river, with a tiny beachlet below the cutbank, and a tall cedar for decoration just at the water's edge. The shadows in its great buttresses guarded a coolness apart from the damp warmth of the little flat or the baking heat of the sunned pebbles on the beachlet. Altogether a cozy and intimate and charming little stage for human action, with always, behind, the great back-drop of the forest, and the spring green of bracken and umbrella-leaved devil's clubs against the massed sobriety of the firs; and on either side, fingers of the river that felt up into the woods searching out the moisture-loving succulent things that delight to flaunt their essential tropicalness in this Northern clime.

"What a deuced fine spot for a crime!" observed Marshall, stepping ashore. "Exquisite, eh, what?"

"Oh, lovely!" agreed X. Anaxagoras. "It's a fine country for crime, anyway. So much room. A fellow doesn't step on the toes of his fellow craftsmen as he does where it's more crowded."

Eats-'em-alive shot at the pair a swift glance of startled inquiry. Marshall's countenance exhibited an expression of complete inanity. X. Anaxagoras was gazing about him through his monocle with all the beaming vacuity of the silly ass. He grunted and heaved himself ashore.

The sailors unpacked and spread out the lunch. One lighted a small fire over which he prepared to make coffee. Nothing was lacking except Arbuthnot and Betsy.

"Must have struck good fishin'," surmised X. Anaxagoras.

"There they come now!" cried Fleshpots, cheerfully, his spirits rising at the prospect of food—and drink. "What's the matter?" he asked.

The latter question was elicited by the open and obvious amazement of his two hosts. They were staring down the river as though they could not believe their own eyes. What they saw was the kicker with its appropriate sailor to run it; Betsy with her red parasol;—and by her side Arbuthnot! Before they could recover to reply to Fleshpots, the kicker landed at the point of the island and Arbuthnot leaped ashore. Then the kicker proceeded on up river in their direction, while the engineer calmly proceeded to cast his fly into the eddy below.

"It's—it's my wife's being on time," gulped Marshall, the first to recover. "Never happened before."

He and X. Anaxagoras, with a common impulse, descended to the beachlet as though to meet the incoming boat.

"Something's gone wrong," muttered X. Anaxagoras. "What the devil do you suppose it is?"

Marshall shook his head. He seized the gunwale of the boat as it came in, and under cover of helping Betsy ashore he asked under his breath:

"What's happened? What's Arbuthnot doing here?"

Betsy smiled at him mockingly as she stepped ashore.

"Imagine!" she cried, in a high, clear voice, "Mr. Arbuthnot simply refuses to come for lunch! I never saw such an enthusiastic fisherman! He says he'd rather fish than eat!"

She trilled with laughter. "He's so original and clever! He says that he's not going to permit anything in the world to interfere with this day's fishing!" She shot a malicious glance at her stupefied kinsfolk. "I used my best persuasion, but I couldn't budge him. I never saw so obstinate a man. I'm famished."

"The more fool he!" cried Fleshpots, jovially. "So am I!"

The picnic lunch was hurried through, somehow, in a manner not precisely to the latter's liking. It was an excellent lunch, and the bottles became ideally cooled in the glacier water of the river. But his hosts seemed preoccupied, and even his hostess—though she chattered and laughed and played up to his roaring jokes much as usual—nevertheless, expedited matters rather too rapidly. After all, this was much better than fishing! But as he was beginning to contemplate with satisfaction the thought of a leisurely cigar, Betsy jumped to her feet.

"Come on!" she cried. "Time's short, and we've got to catch a lot of fish! I'm going to take poor Mr. Arbuthnot some sandwiches, though he doesn't deserve any. Jerry," she suggested, "why don't we send all the stuff aboard in the kicker, and let it come back later? You can go fishing in the cutter. I'll get Rogg to put me—and the sandwiches—on the island with Mr. Arbuthnot. Would you rather wait here or come along?" she asked the guests.

"Wait here!" replied Eats-'em-alive, with unflattering promptness.

"I think if you don't mind, Mrs. Marshall, I'll smoke a cigar," said Fleshpots, more politely. "I've caught quite

a few fish already," he could not forbear adding, with pride.

"I should think you had! Many more than Mr. Arbuthnot. He's going to be very jealous. But when you've finished your cigar you must go catch some more. I wish the dinghy were big enough so I could go along to see you."

"It *is* rather small," Eats-'em-alive hastened to say.

The sailors had expeditiously packed the lunch things and were already put-putting off down the stream. Marshall, X. Anaxagoras, and Betsy followed, heading toward the point of the island where Arbuthnot had last been seen. The latter had by now withdrawn to the far side of the island, out of sight.

"What's the explanation?" demanded the two men, as soon as they were out of earshot. "Why didn't he go?"

Betsy smiled at them mockingly.

"Perhaps you'd better ask him," she suggested; and would say no more.

They rounded the island, and so drew out of sight of the two under the cedar tree in the lagoon. Arbuthnot must have become discouraged by bad luck, for he was no longer fishing. He sat on a boulder, with his back to them, smoking. The noise of the current subdued the sound of oars, and it was only when the prow grated on the gravel that he became aware of their approach. Then he leaped respectfully to his feet and faced them.

"Pierce!" gasped Marshall.

"Yes, sir," grinned the sailor.

"What does this mean?"

"I had him change clothes with Mr. Arbuthnot," chortled Betsy. "They're about of a build. I thought it might

seem more natural if Mr. Arbuthnot did not just evaporate into thin air. Anyway, it's more artistic. The poor dears still think we're all present and accounted for. You were fooled yourselves. And Mr. Arbuthnot looked so sweet in his sailor clothes."

Marshall and the Healer of Souls were laughing. Pierce and Rogg were on a broad, delighted grin.

"How did Arbuthnot take to it?" queried Jerry, at length. "Not that he had a chance, if you'd made up your mind!"

"He loved it. Mr. Arbuthnot," stated Betsy, with conviction, "is a dead game sport."

"Well, hop aboard, Pierce," commanded Marshall, finally, "and you, Rogg, follow us close under the other bank so they won't see you. Let's go do what we've got to do."

The two boats cut across the current and began to work their way close into the bushes and out of sight of the bayou. Marshall looked back at the dainty figure in the dinghy with fond admiration.

"I told you she was up to some devilment!" he chuckled.

CHAPTER XXVII

FLESHPOTS and Eats-'em-alive, left alone, settled themselves, each after his fashion, to pass the time. Eats-'em-alive perched humped over on a fallen log and glowered at his feet. There was just so much of this to endure, and this was as good a place as another. At any rate, he was freed from the gadfly buzzing of that woman! Fleshpots, replete with food and warmed with drink and furnished forth with what his sophisticated palate assured him was a genuine *vuelto abajo*, was torpidly content. For the moment he was not having a bad time at all, if only his partner would keep quiet. But after a prolonged interval the latter broke the silence.

"I wonder why in hell they don't send back that boat!" he grunted.

"Probably they're using it to fish from," said Fleshpots, sleepily. "It'll be along."

"Well, they're long enough about it!"

Fleshpots aroused himself to look with distaste at the dour figure on the log.

"I didn't know you were so anxious to go fishing," said he, sarcastically.

"Well, I hate this slipshod irresponsibility," growled Eats-'em-alive.

"This looks good enough for me," said Fleshpots, stretch-

ing himself luxuriously on the moss. "They can take as long as they want, as far as I am concerned."

The little flat fell silent. All about the patient-hearted trees brooding over the forest underlings seemed to watch, and the spell of their long duration mingled with the warm sunlight. Fleshpots dozed deliciously, and even Eats-'em-alive fell into a passive blank remoteness. Thus an hour passed. Then the older man jerked himself together with a snap and glanced at his watch.

"It's time the fools were making a start if they intend to get back to-night," said he. "But I suppose they haven't the remotest idea of time!" he added, bitterly.

"There they come now," said Fleshpots, inclining his ear.

The cutter, manned by four sailors at the oars, crept around the bend, making its way against the strong current.

"How in thunder do they expect us to find room in that thing?" wondered Eats-'em-alive, impatiently, "and what in blazes have they got with them?"

Both inquiries would seem to be fully justified. The cutter appeared to be full to the guards with goods of some sort, and atop perched X. Anaxagoras and Marshall. The cutter, under powerful propulsion, angled across the current from the island, nosed her way into the backwater and grated her bow on the pebbles of the beachlet. The two passengers picked their way gingerly forward and debarked: the four sailors with great promptitude began to unload the various bundles with which the cutter was filled. X. Anaxagoras and Marshall approached their astonished guests, a look of concern on their otherwise silly faces.

"I say," said Marshall, "I'm deucedly sorry, and all that sort of thing; wouldn't have had it happen for worlds! It's jolly awkward, having got you up here, just for the day, and all that. But we'll make you as comfortable as possible; and by Jove!" he laughed, "if I do say it, that is jolly comfortable. We have about everything mortal man could wish aboard, you know."

"Would you mind telling me what you mean?" demanded Eats-'em-alive.

"Oh, yes, by Jove! Well, the fact of the matter is, we've broken down. Engine won't go. You see the ball-bearing race of the thrust bearing has ground down so fine that the web of the piston rod bearings——"

"I know nothing about machinery," interrupted Eats-'em-alive, impatiently. "Come to the point."

"Nothing at all?" asked X. Anaxagoras, with a gleam of interest.

"Not a thing. And don't want to. What's the point?"

"Well, I'm awfully sorry," said Marshall, apologetically, "but we can't move until we get it fixed, So," he brightened up, "we're going to fix you up here, right as rain. You'll be much more comfy here than aboard, because you see the whole after cabin will be in a mess. We have to take up the floors to get at the thrust bearing, and since that's connected just forward of the stuffing box, it——"

"I told you I know nothing of machinery!" interposed Eats-'em-alive, with a slightly augmented vehemence, "and I don't want to. Come to the point, if you're capable of it. Do I gather we have to spend the night?"

"Yes, that's it," cried Marshall, as though relieved. "You've guessed it first off! Good egg!"

"Humph!" snorted Eats-'em-alive. He took two paces toward the woods, and then two paces back to face them again. His manner was now informed by a suppressed fury of patience that restrains itself with difficulty merely in order to get the facts before it turns itself loose to blast all nature. "And since there is not room aboard your confounded incompetent boat, you are going to have us camp here? Is that it?"

"Why, that's what I was telling you," rejoined Marshall, as though slightly bewildered. "You'll be much better off, and get a good night's sleep, and be fresh and happy in the morning. By Jove, I envy you—trilling brooks, and little birds singin' all about and dew on the grass, and all that sort of thing. For two cents—— By Jove!" He turned to X. Anaxagoras. "Why don't we all come and camp? Betsy would be delighted! Long evenin' around the camp fire and sparks in the air and what-you-may-call-its chirpin' out in the dark, and all that sort of thing. Topping!"

In military circles this might have been labelled a camouflaged anticipatory counter attack, and would recall the strategic axiom that attack is the best defence. It succeeded admirably. In the panic of a possible Betsy the necessity of delay lost its immediate importance. Marshall allowed several seconds of dismay before he continued.

"But I s'pose it's too late now to get things up the river," he added, regretfully. "And, anyway, I ought to be aboard. Do you know," he confided, happily, "I'm an

awful duffer about most things, but I'm strong on machinery. You wouldn't think it, now, would you?"

The sailors, with a rapidity born of long accustomedness, had levelled a space, erected a small A tent. Now two of them were unfolding cots and spreading blankets, while the other two placed a folding table, chairs, a small chest, and various other items of use and luxury.

"All the comforts of home!" said Marshall, puttering happily about amongst these preparations; "nothin' missing! Hot dinner in the fireless cooker—great invention, what? and coffee in the thermos bottles, and"—he lowered his voice and diverted the current of his remarks ever so slightly toward Fleshpots—"fizz in the pail there with the ice."

"Well"—Eats-'em-alive grudgingly accepted the situation—"how early to-morrow can you get me back?"

"Oh, I'm afraid not to-morrow," replied Marshall, deprecatingly.

"What!" roared Eats-'em-alive, in a tone that caused the four sailors to stop short in their occupations and distant female deer of pessimistic temperament to inform their progeny that *now* would they be good: here was some brand-new creature of destruction loose in the landscape.

"You see," explained Marshall, hastily and with deprecation, "the ball-bearings run in a bronze plate, and that thrusts up against a steel race with——"

"Damn your machinery!" he was interrupted. "Young man, I want you to know that I consider this an outrage. And I want an answer in plain words, if you can give one."

"Certainly, sir," replied Marshall. "What answer?"

"How long before you will have this thing fixed?"

"Just as soon as we can," Marshall assured him, eagerly. "You see the race is an especial forging, and then, too, we don't know quite how long it will take the kicker to get there and back, and that depends on the weather a good deal, of course; and then, too, there may not be a shop there, or it may be busy, or——"

Eats-'em-alive turned with a sort of savage despair to X. Anaxagoras.

"Just a bit foggy, old chap," the latter told Marshall. "You see," he said to Eats-'em-alive, with a bland patience as though explaining in words of one syllable, "this bit of machinery must be mended at a shop. So we sent the kicker with it to the nearest shop. And we can't tell, naturally, quite when she'll get back."

"Well," stated Eats-'em-alive with decision, "I suppose there's nothing for it but to stay here to-night. But I've got important business to attend to, and I expect to be sent back to-morrow somehow to my property."

"I should like to arrange it," agreed Marshall. "Most annoying, of course. But the kicker is gone with the ball-bearing race and——"

"You still have the sails on your blasted boat, haven't you?" demanded Eats-'em-alive, with a sneer.

X. Anaxagoras intervened before Marshall could speak.

"It's like this," said he, emphasizing his points by tapping his monocle on his forefinger: "an auxiliary schooner like the *Spindrift* has a convertible screw. That's so, when she sails without power, the screw won't drag her back. Well,

naturally, a screw shaft has to pass through a stuffin' box so that water won't all come in the boat, and then it comes to this thrust bearin' we've been tellin' you about. Now, of course, when you remove the thrust bearin', thus breakin' the connection with the power plant, your screw, bein' unattached——"

"*Will* you tell me what you're talking about?" demanded Eats-'em-alive.

X. Anaxagoras mounted his monocle to stare at the other.

"I was tellin' you why we couldn't sail until we had fixed the machinery," said he.

"Well, if you can't sail you can have me rowed over. It can't be far. At any rate, you've got to get me back. I didn't want to come on your confounded boat, and I hold you responsible."

"I'm frightfully sorry, of course, and all that," spoke up Marshall, "and I'll do all I can. But I doubt if the men would row that far and back. You've no idea"—he turned to Eats-'em-alive, as though for understanding sympathy—"how independent these modern sailors are. But perhaps they might. I'll try 'em." He addressed the sailors, who had been attending with wooden faces to all of the foregoing. "Men," he said, "this gentleman wants you to row him back to the mine to-morrow. Will you do it?"

"We will die first!" came back a chorus, with startling unanimity.

"You see?" Marshall appealed to Eats-'em-alive resignedly. "One can do nothin' with them."

Eats-'em-alive swallowed hard, probably to prevent him-

self from telling what he'd do if men in his employ behaved like that. Instead, he addressed the men direct.

"I'll make it well worth your while," he offered, shortly.

There was no chorus in reply to this, possibly for lack of rehearsal. After a moment's uncertain hesitation Rogg spoke up with the air of one who has stumbled on inspiration.

"Gold cannot buy me," he mumbled.

A strong, upheaving undercurrent swept emotionally through all the *Spindrift's* people, restrained from breaking only by X. Anaxagoras's stern air of repression.

"All fixed?" he cried. "Then all aboard! Come on! See you in the morning! Ta-ta!" He hustled them aboard the cutter and they shoved out in the stream.

"Here!" cried Eats-'em-alive, starting forward.

"See you to-morrow!" cried back the Healer of Souls as the boat caught the current and swept away.

Once around the bend the men rested for a moment on their oars, and their eyes crossed those of the two in the stern. Then all six burst into a shout of laughter.

"Most excellent performance," said X. Anaxagoras, at last, "somewhat leaning toward the farcical, perhaps dangerously so, if we desire full credence. But as yet the reactions are merely of exasperation. Rogg's improvisation—or perhaps I should say timely recollection—was priceless."

"Look out he don't try greenbacks on ye," chaffed Pierce at Rogg, who turned red.

"Why didn't some of the rest of you say something, then?" he muttered, defensively.

"Point well taken," said the Healer of Souls, "and the line seems to me both pleasing and apposite."

CHAPTER XXVIII

A HALF hour later the three major conspirators sat at ease in the cabin of the *Spindrift*, which showed no traces whatever of the upheaval so vividly portrayed by Marshall. Betsy was listening eagerly to the account of the expedition.

"I told you I could have gone," she commented, reproachfully, when informed that there had been no biting, kicking, scratching, or gouging, and no more or worse profanity than is assimilable by any modern young woman properly brought up. "I'm going hereafter. I wouldn't miss the dawn of realization for anything. Do you think they suspect anything yet?"

"No, not yet. But the spectre of suspicion cannot long tarry from that idyllic retreat. Not unless their troubles drive them quite off their heads."

"What shall you do then?"

"We must be quite unaware of the fact, even when directly accused."

"What fun!" cried Betsy. "Did he miss Arbuthnot?"

"He will to-morrow."

"What are you going to do when they get restless?"

"Let them. What can they do about it? They can't get within a half mile of the salt chuck owing to the marshes. We won't leave them any boat."

"Kinsey Landing is only a few miles away. They might walk over there."

"They might if they knew of its existence. But it is to the north, and the mine is to the south."

"It's going to be fun," repeated Betsy. She mused for a moment. "I know it's weak-minded," she added then, "but, do you know, I can't help but feel sorry for poor little Fleshpots. He looks like a suppressed and down-trodden puppy."

When, the following morning, at an hour appointed, they stepped on deck, the cutter was alongside, but the entire crew, including even Plutarch and the Ram, were gathered in a close group arguing with subdued violence against Benton, who looked red-faced and rather savage.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Marshall.

"Mighty little short of mutiny, that's what!" rejoined Benton, curtly.

"Mutiny!" repeated Marshall, stepping forward quickly.

"They won't obey orders," said Benton; "that is to say, these men won't!" His heavy fist swept a group which included all but the cutter's oarsmen. The latter were now seen to be standing apart, broadly a-grin.

"What's the trouble?" asked Marshall. "You, Gates."

"It isn't that we won't obey orders, sir," replied Gates; "Mr. Benton ain't quite right there. We was just arguing-like, and maybe we got carried away a little."

"Well, what's it all about? Get on!"

"It don't seem noways fair that them fellows"—he indicated the cutter's crew—"should have all the fun up river there. It ought to be turn and turn about. They

was telling us last night in the fo'castle, and we want to see the show, too. How'd it be if they was to row you up one time, and the other four was to take their turn the next time? That seems fair."

Marshall's mouth twitched.

"How do *you* get in this?" he demanded of Plutarch and the Ram.

"Got to be somebody cook for those gen'men," rumbled the Ram. "I aims to wo'k right spry and make'm up nice dinner in dah fi'less cookah and be all ready come time you-all retu'ns to come back abo'd."

"I see," said Marshall, "and"—he turned to Plutarch—"I suppose you want to go up to keep their trousers pressed for them."

He drew Benton aside.

"Of course, you're right, Benton," he told his mate, "and I'll back you up if you say so. But I believe it would be wise to make up two crews and alternate, as the men suggest. The situation is somewhat unusual, you'll admit. It may be that it's too late to back down without loss of discipline, but fix it if you can."

Then Benton did something which is, as far as I know, quite unprecedented in deep-sea annals.

"Men," he said, "you are right and I'm wrong. Mr. Marshall says to fix it the way you say."

"That was handsome of you," Marshall commended him, under his breath.

Benton grinned at him a trifle sheepishly.

"Well, I suppose it must be an amusing show," said he.

"Benton, you're just honing to go yourself!" accused

Marshall. "I never thought of it! You shall! Hereafter you steer the cutter!" He turned to the men. "All right, boys, but remember to play the game. You know the yarn: stick to it no matter what they say or do. I leave that to you. Of course, he'll try to bribe you, each one of you."

"Gold cannot buy us!" came back in a hearty nautical sing-song, followed by a roar of laughter directed toward Rogg.

This being arranged, a somewhat overladen cutter proceeded up the river. As they rounded the point of the island and came in sight of the camp, Betsy uttered a cry of relief.

"Both alive," she said. "Neither has murdered the other in his sleep."

Fleshpots met them with his usual joviality, under which could be sensed an undercurrent of real anxiety. It is possible that the fuse had burned very close to the powder magazine and he felt that only encouraging news could extinguish it. Eats-'em-alive's manner, too, was slightly more animated than usual.

"Well, well!" roared Fleshpots. "How's every little thing? Nearly all fixed up, I suppose?"

"How do you do," Betsy greeted him, stepping daintily ashore, the first to land. Eats-'em-alive faded backward. "Isn't this lovely? I hope you slept well and had a good breakfast."

"Perfect! Perfect, dear lady!" boomed Fleshpots. "Most delightful!" He assumed a hospitably proprietary air and drew her aside, fulfilling several hastily delivered but vehement instructions given him by his chief after the

latter had identified the cutter's occupants. Eats-'em-alive seized the opportunity to approach Marshall and his brother-in-law.

"Well?" he demanded, curtly but without heat.

"We've brought you up our cook who will fix you all up properly—good food and all that sort of thing," said Marshall, brightly.

Eats-'em-alive brushed this aside.

"Yes, yes! But about your repairs: how soon do you expect to get off?"

Marshall stared at him blankly.

"My dear man, how can I tell? As soon as possible, I assure you. Just as soon as the kicker gets back we'll hustle it together in no time. You can rely on that, absolutely."

"Well, how long will it be before the kicker returns?"

"I told you yesterday that it all depends."

Eats-'em-alive began to lose a trifle of his miraculous calm.

"You can make a guess, can't you? How far did she have to go to this shop? How long a job is it to make this what-you-call-it?"

"Ball-bearing plate for the forward thrust bearing," Marshall reminded him, conscientiously.

"How far? How long?" insisted Eats-'em-alive, an edge to his voice.

"I haven't the foggiest idea, old chap," replied Marshall. "Benton takes care of all that. You might ask him."

Eats-'em-alive did so, with a growing asperity. Benton spat carefully.

"I can't exactly say, sir," he replied, after due deliberation. "If the weather is fine outside she could make it in two days running. They'll have to lay up at night. The job might be done in a day, or perhaps two at most. Say five or six days. But if they have to lay up for weather, it might be a week or so."

"A week or so!" howled Eats-'em-alive, in a voice that caused everybody within hearing to look up hopefully, except Fleshpots. He, too, looked up, but it was not hopefully. However, Eats-'em-alive instantly became deadly calm and almost polite. "It would oblige me greatly," he told Marshall, "if you will send Arbuthnot up here to see me at once."

Marshall's countenance exhibited the liveliest concern.

"Oh, I'm sorry, old chap, but that's quite impossible," he replied.

"Impossible!" repeated Eats-'em-alive. "I'd like to know why?"

"You see, old chap," Marshall explained, with every mark of earnest propitiation, "our engineer is workin' on the yacht, so Mr. Arbuthnot kindly volunteered to see about the ball-bearin' plate. Mighty sportin' of him."

"He what?"

"He went with the kicker," Marshall broke the news.

The full enormity of this performance on the part of his paid minion was seen visibly to swell, like a rapidly inflated balloon, within the already strained self-control of Eats-'em-alive. Betsy chose this moment before explosion to come brightly forward.

"Isn't it going to be *delightful?*" she cried. "If we *had*

to get cast away in this dreadful fashion, there couldn't be a nicer place! I know you feel awfully vexed—now don't deny it: I know!—but you really need this vacation. You work much too hard. I can tell. Your nerves are really quite jumpy. And now you're going to settle down and have a nice refreshing time of it. We'll have such fun. Time won't drag a bit. We'll come up every day and have a jolly picnic lunch together. And every day I'm going to bring you a little present, a little surprise. That will give you some little thing to look forward to. No, I'm not going to tell you: you'll have to guess." She handed him an oblong package done up with tissue paper and pink ribbon. "Here's to-day's. You can open it. I found them among Jerry's things. They are little tiny cigars. I notice you like to bite cigars in half and these are nice little ones. It's a funny habit, but I imagine it is very soothing to the nerves. I had a friend who was a navy officer who used to bite cigars in half. He broke himself of the most awful cursing that way."

She thrust the package into his hands.

'Eats-'em-alive, struck dumb, glared at it. The other principals in the drama, having been well trained and well warned, managed to preserve an appropriate demeanour. It was from Fleshpots that the demonstration proceeded. At Betsy's speech and presentation he uttered a loud snort as of a mettlesome horse at a broken-down motor car; and then, hurriedly, and with only partial success, tried to look as though the emission of snorts was part of his daily routine and in no manner to be connected with merely attendant circumstances. Truth to tell, Fleshpots was in secret sym-

pathy beginning to go over to the enemy; although, naturally, he did not as yet suspect it was an enemy. His companion was none too amiable in the best of conditions, but lately, Eats-'em-alive had relieved exacerbated feelings to a certain extent by taking them out on the nearest non-resistant—which was Fleshpots. The latter had been browbeaten and cursed into a state of numbness and dumbness wholly inconsonant with his essential puppyness. As Betsy said, he did not even dare make the best of it. But beneath his chief's glare he became abject.

Betsy spread forth the day in much the sprightly now-dear-children manner of a playground instructress. Things moved with the effect of a programme in a hurry-up circus where one act treads close on the heels of another.

"The first thing we must do is to have a swim!" she cried, gaily. "That will buck us up for the day. The water is nice and still in the bayou, and there's a nice gravel bottom. Everybody must go in! I've brought a water-polo ball and we'll have a wonderful time!"

"I never go in swimming," rejoined Eats-'em-alive.

"Besides, we have no bathing suits," added Fleshpots, with secret thanksgiving. He had drunk water from the river and had found it cold enough to make his teeth ache.

"Oh, I've brought you bathing suits," Betsy bowled this down. "You've simply *got* to go in."

And go in they did, contrary to their own firm resolves; and why they were so weak-minded they could not have told. It was always comparatively easy to influence Fleshpots; he was eminently suggestible. But why Eats-

'em-alive finally retired, draped a bathing suit over his gaunt form, and grimly splashed in the glacier water to the accompaniment of girlish laughter was a mystery not only to himself, but to all other males present, including that eminent psychologist, X. Anaxagoras. Possibly he was being influenced by his subconscious, for a change; and that infallible and faithful though neglected guide warned him that he'd better embrace the present but known evil rather than risk some more diabolical substitute which this brainless but imaginative pest would be sure to evolve. Fleshpots turned a faintly purplish red; Eats-'em-alive a slightly faded indigo; even those hardy mariners, Marshall and X. Anaxagoras, inclined somewhat to the cold storage in effect. Only Betsy, with the usual mysterious feminine power of resistance to cold water, was warm and rosy.

They had dressed and again gathered in the glade. Marshall unobtrusively sidled alongside Fleshpots. With a stealthy warning gesture in the direction of Eats-'em-alive, he lifted the flap of his coat pocket to exhibit the silver end of a flask. He winked at Fleshpots. Fleshpots winked back. Quietly they faded into the background. They drank. They returned. Eats-'em-alive was still faded indigo. Marshall grinned quite openly at Fleshpots. Fleshpots grinned back, a malicious satisfaction in his little eyes.

"Wasn't that just too lovely for words?" Betsy demanded of Eats-'em-alive. "Now you must do that every morning before breakfast. It'll do you so much good. Now," she said, happily, "I'm going to show you your pretty things. Bring that suitcase, Gates, please."

The suitcase was brought and opened.

"I want you to be nice and comfy," said Betsy, diving into its contents. She held up a suit of thin pink silk pajamas, and inspected them, her head on one side. "Aren't they loves?" she asked. "And here's Jerry's own dressing gown. I won't let him wear it on the yacht, the pattern is too big and bright; he got it in Singapore because he thought it was funny. But it is just the thing out here in the open, isn't it? I think a little splash of colour in all these green things is lovely. Put it on and let's see." She held it out. "Oh, come now, I've set my heart on it. Don't be a big silly!"

Eats-'em-alive eventually put on the Singapore dressing gown Marshall had bought because he thought it was funny for the same reason he had gone into the glacier water; that is, for no reasoned reason at all, but simply in obedience to an instinct that, unless he did as he was told, worse would befall. What there could be worse, he was too dazed and buffeted to inquire. His lean, scraggy neck and baleful at-bay countenance rose above the gaudy fabric in beautiful harmony.

"Why, I think it's lovely on you!" approved Betsy, critically. "It isn't a dressing gown, really, you know; it's a sort of ceremonial dress. There's a sort of high peaked cap thing goes with it. Here it is." She clapped it on his head and struck her hands together delightedly. "You look just like a lama!—Or is that one of those camel things from South America?—Or a Chinese prince!" This gave her a new thought. "Mah-jongg!" she cried. "Did you ever play mah-jongg? You'd just love it!"

"I never play games," protested Eats-'em-alive, recovering enough to snatch off the cap.

"You'll like this one. Come on! You've got to learn."

The surprising creature produced a mah-jongg set from the inexhaustible cutter and dumped the tiles out on the folding table.

"Come on, everybody!" she urged. "There are just enough of us, for I'm not going to play. I'm going to sit back of Mr. Maxon and teach him the game."

By the time that black cloud shot with lightning had passed it was lunch time. Eats-'em-alive, to tell the truth, did not prove an apt pupil. Indeed, Betsy played the hand. She did it by main strength, though the strength was concealed beneath a chatter of small encouragements, rare congratulations, and incessant playful chidings that ran to the effect of "Now, Mr. Maxon, that's not a dragon, that's the one-bamboo, and remember you mustn't——" and so on, in a maze of technical jargon. Mah-jongg, to the beginner, is at best a bewilderment, even when approached with enthusiasm and a desire to learn. Eats-'em-alive had neither. He tried not to learn, but he was beset with "pongs," "chows," "dogs," "fouls," "gongs," and other Mongolian idiocies, until he felt as though he were with difficulty holding his own against a pelting rain.

Lunch, ably cooked and served by the Ram, was at least a partial respite. He ate more than he wanted, and more than he should have eaten, sheerly in self-defence and out of a nervous desire to keep occupied. Betsy remarked upon the nervousness.

"I'm going to bring you the most *wonderful* book," she

told him. "It's all about nerves and energy. It will do you so much good." She clapped her hand over her mouth. "Oh!" she exclaimed, in dismay, "that was to be your surprise for to-morrow, and I've gone and told you! Now I'll have to think of something else." She fell into a blessed silence, apparently trying to think of something else. It did not long endure. "I've got it!" she cried at last. "No, I'm not going to tell you. Don't you wish you knew?" She looked about her, and was struck with another happy thought. "Jerry!" she appealed to her husband, "can't we bring up the phonograph? This would be a *blissful* place to dance! We could have some jazz—in the evening, by the light of a camp fire. Don't you *love* to dance, Mr. Maxon?"

"I never danced in my life," he got in a word.

"Oh, I'll teach you! It will be just too lovely!"

But at this point Marshall arose.

"Sorry, but we must be goin'," said he; "—see about the work, and all that sort of thing."

"Oh, must we go?" protested Betsy. "We are having such a good time! I suppose we must! Husbands are such tyrants. Never mind, we'll be up early to-morrow, and we'll bring the phonograph. Jerry!"—another happy thought—"can't we rig up some sort of auxiliary wireless from the yacht? Then they can listen to the weather reports and things."

For the first time that day Eats-'em-alive pricked up his ears and took an interest.

"You have a wireless?" he asked.

"I should think we had!" replied Betsy, proudly. "It's

the very best sort there is. It's awfully powerful. You can talk to New York or London or almost anywhere."

Eats-'em-alive brushed aside frivolity with something of his old manner and addressed himself to Marshall.

"If that is the case," said he, briskly, "you can easily call up the nearest land station and have them send down a gas boat at once to take us back."

"Good idea!" agreed Marshall. "That is masterly! To be sure! Good bean! What could be simpler!" He paused as though in contemplation of the beauty of this solution of the problem; then slowly an expression of utter blankness overspread his countenance. "Only, unfortunately," he added, "our instrument only receives; it does not send."

"Har-*umph!*" remarked Eats-'em-alive, whatever that may mean.

Betsy allowed no room for further developments, but tripped lightly to the waiting cutter.

"Good-bye!" She waved her parasol. "It's been such a lovely day, hasn't it? I hope it takes them a *long* time to fix their old engine, don't you?"

The cutter felt the current and slipped away. The two figures under the big cedar receded. If the occupants of the cutter had observed closely before it rounded the bend they might have seen the taller figure tear itself free from and hurl to the ground a brilliant silken fabric and on it execute a dance not inappropriate to its oriental origin.

Nothing was said for some moments while the three took an emotional rest.

"It was wonderful, Betsy," at length said X. Anaxagoras, "but look out, or you'll overdo it."

"Overdo it!" she echoed, scornfully. "Look to yourselves! If you're going to drop your final g's, for Heaven's sake drop all of them! What did you leave for?" she demanded of Marshall. "It was such fun."

"To avoid bloodshed," replied the young man, shortly. He produced the silver flask. "I need a drink. It's exciting, but it wears on me." He looked thoughtfully at her with mingled satisfaction and happiness but also with awe. He shook his head in a species of wonder, examining her pretty figure, her glinting hair, her wide intelligent eyes, all her alert, whimsical beauty. "I guess you're back again, all right," he said. "That other woman scares me—for fear she's it. I certainly do need a drink. I don't believe I'll go up to-morrow: I can't stand the strain."

"Oh, yes, you will!" Betsy assured him. "I have to go!"

"I have a sort of feeling there may not be any to-morrow," interposed X. Anaxagoras.

They both looked at him questioningly.

"I think it likely he will have drowned himself before then," said the Healer of Souls.

CHAPTER XXIX

THIS peculiar form of bear baiting could in the nature of things last but a few days. Those few days, however, were made the most of. Betsy continued full of bright ideas. But toward the last it ceased to be fun for the simple reason that the principal bear refused to be further baited and turned sullen. Certainly he could not have been said ever to have been meticulous as to the social amenities, but now he abandoned all pretence to any such relations whatever. So Betsy made one final gesture and withdrew from the daily visits. She brought a huge and ornate daily calendar which she tacked against the cedar.

"There!" she said, "now you can keep track of the days without cutting notches on a stick, like Robinson Crusoe. That is, if you remember to tear off the leaves every morning."

Eats-'em-alive about this time ceased to inquire as to the progress of the work, or whether the kicker had come back, or what the chances were of getting away. In fact, he ceased to inquire about anything. Betsy remarked on this.

"It's very simple," replied her brother. "He's beginning to suspect."

In this he was quite correct, though what there was exactly to suspect, Eats-'em alive himself could not have

told. However, he voiced his uneasiness to his companion at the camp fire after supper.

"There's something wrong here," he said, abruptly, "something fishy."

Fleshpots, who was being well fed, and not baited, and who had a pocket full of *vuelto abajos*, and a surreptitious flask that had been kindheartedly sneaked to him (after the first evening's fizz Eats-'em-alive had not been alcoholically favoured), looked up in surprise.

"This delay," Eats-'em-alive condescended to explain, "I have a feeling there's something phony about it. I'm beginning to believe they're holding us here for some reason or other."

"Who?" queried Fleshpots, merely out of the astonishment of a new idea.

Eats-'em-alive looked at him.

"The Shah of Persia, of course," said he, with fine sarcasm.

Fleshpots recovered himself.

"But what would be their object?" he protested.

"How do I know? But I don't like it."

Fleshpots considered.

"Oh, come now, R. K.! That lot! What earthly object could they have?" He considered further. "Except devilment, perhaps. I wouldn't put it beyond that girl!" He chuckled fatly, but the chuckle died away as he met his partner's glance. Fleshpots reflected that the latter was neither chafing nor cursing nor crushing nor abating, and that could mean only one thing—that he was scared. He himself sobered and began to think. "They can't pos-

sibly," he said at last. "Stop to think, R. K. Look at their yacht and all that: they are wealthy people of the idle class. And they haven't brains enough to pull anything, even if they knew anything about it all. And how could they learn anything?"

"Arbuthnot."

"What he could tell them couldn't do any harm; and I don't believe he'd tell them anything anyway."

"I don't like him."

"Neither do I. But unless I miss my guess he's one of these fellows who have a great idea of professional confidence. Why should he spill to the first chance comers?"

"If they were chance comers."

Fleshpots stared at him.

"What are you driving at?" he demanded at last. "What's the idea? Where's the sense to it? Concede that they had got hep and wanted to butt in, they wouldn't do anything as foolish as this. They'd come in with a constable's boat and a bunch of bluebellies. Get together, R. K.!" Emboldened by the atmosphere he ventured a grin. "Better read that book on nerves and worry the little lady brought you."

This was a mistake, as Eats-'em-alive fully demonstrated by a reversion to type. Fleshpots did not take it quite lying down. To be sure, he did not go so far as to fight back, but he made faces from a safe distance behind the fence, so to speak.

"You make me sick!" he muttered. "You've been going to too many movies. It's a rotten situation, but it's

natural enough. I don't see any earthly reason to tear your shirt."

"It certainly looks to me as though they were keeping us out of the way."

"Out of the way of what, for the love of Mike!" shouted Fleshpots, exasperated. "Get some sense! What can they do with us here that they couldn't do with us there? Hwang Tso is on the job, ain't he? If they get around that old pirate and his gang, what difference could we make?"

"Just the same I'd like to be back there," grumbled Eats-'em alive. "What's to keep Hwang Tso from working into the pocket and making off with the swag on his own hook? Hadn't thought of that, had you?" he sneered.

"I hope he does—keep on with the work, I mean. He could make off with part of the swag, but he won't."

"Why won't he?"

"Because what he could make off with while we're away wouldn't come up to his share of the whole thing," replied Fleshpots, shrewdly, "and he don't know how big the whole thing is going to be. It wouldn't pay him."

Eats-'em-alive was silenced, but he could not emulate Fleshpot's ability to sink back into comfortable optimism. His uneasiness persisted and it grew. At least, he saw now clearly one thing: that he was being made game of by these feather brains. It might well be that Barker was right: that the situation was as represented. It probably was. But beyond shadow of a doubt these idiots were getting a lot of impish fun out of it and would be more inclined to prolong than abridge it as long as they could therefrom

extract any amusement. So he retired utterly into his shell.

But in spite of himself his uneasiness grew. He began to pace his cage, to gnaw at the bars. When Betsy ceased to visit the little camp, and the other two, with one excuse or another, to appear but rarely, and then for brief periods, he had his chance at the men. Each day they came up river in the cutter bringing food and supplies. Eats-'em-alive developed a surprising geniality. It was a pity his hosts could not have seen him. He fraternized almost jovially; and the joviality did not creak very much at that. They all sprawled on the beach and smoked and talked. Eats-'em-alive became quite a diplomat. He never questioned directly, but bit by bit he sought corroboration of the main elements of the situation; and he did it with a masterly casualness that was greatly relished by the simple sailormen. The simple sailormen were all hand-picked, keen-witted Americans. They had been made quite familiar with all features of the case, and they supplied Eats-'em-alive with just the information he wanted and with an apparent guilelessness that was even more masterly than his indirection. The kicker had indeed gone to get a piece of machinery welded; Arbuthnot had indeed gone with it; they had indeed for the past year been cruising around the world. That was the bare skeleton, to whose construction and articulation they adhered with admirable fidelity. But in the clothing of that skeleton they permitted themselves considerable latitude. Marshall would not have known himself as a marvel of athletic strength, ruthless when

crossed in any of his numerous and eccentric whims, terrible when roused, given to wild and freakish pranks with no regard to consequences, of a fairly paranoiac sense of humour which generally took the direction of practical jokes of a terrifyingly wide scope.

"You never can tell what he will do next, sir," Pierce informed him. "He's just as like as not to start out for an afternoon and be gone three months."

"That's right," chimed in Rogg. The other men looked toward him expectantly. Marshall had once described Rogg to X. Anaxagoras as the stupidest man on the yacht. In the making of that definition his experience had misled him. Rogg was none too quick when it came to reaction to practical matters that required individual initiative, but his imagination worked freely in the realms of fancy, and his square, stolid, matter-of-fact gravity lent substantiality to conceptions otherwise scientifically unacceptable: "You mind"—he turned to Gates—"the time he had that banker aboard? You see, sir," he told Eats-'em-alive, gravely, "this banker came out to go sailing with Mr. Marshall just for the afternoon. He told Mr. Marshall he had to get back that night on account of some business, and he worried a lot about it. So Mr. Marshall took him down to Rio. We was gone about three months. That banker he certainly acted crazy. He was going to do all kinds of things till Mr. Marshall took him up in the rigging and lashed him to the foretruck for a few hours. I call to mind there was quite a chop of a sea running, but Mr. Marshall carried him up like he'd been a baby. He was a heavy-set man, too—a good deal your build, sir," Rogg told Fleshpots, "and he

sure was funny. He kicked like a kid. But it didn't do him no good! He was quiet after that, until we got to Rio." Rogg chuckled. "Then he raised hell all right! He talked awful loud about being shanghaied and such, and he went off to see the American consul, and he come back with six of these little tin soldiers with swords. Mr. Marshall threw 'em all overboard into the harbour. He didn't even take off his coat, either. We haven't been back to Rio since. He's a caution, sir, when he gets a notion," concluded Rogg, admiringly. "Cost him something, too. The banker man nailed him, next time we put in to New York, and sued him. But, bless you, Mr. Marshall don't mind! He's always willing to pay for his fun, I'll say that for him. Ain't that right, boys?"

The boys agreed that that was right. It appeared that they swore by Mr. Marshall. Indeed, their loyalty to him was, from the point of view of Eats-'em-alive, almost overemphasized. Discouragingly so.

"He says now that he's going to China," pursued Rogg, "but Lord love you, sir, when that bit of machinery is fixed he's just as likely to up-anchor and hit straight out for Tahiti. Have you ever been to Tahiti, sir?"

And upon this the cutter's crew, feeling undoubtedly that for this day they had done their one good deed, arose, saying they'd better get back aboard.

CHAPTER XXX

THE cutter's crew were accustomed to come aft immediately on their return to the yacht for the purpose of making a detailed report. At first this was abridged and full of suppressions, but X. Anaxagoras questioned shrewdly; and the men, finding the audience at once informal and sympathetic, made their recitals with gusto. Those who had been left aboard for the day gathered in the background to hear at first hand. It was quite a family gathering, full of human appreciations and laughters and chaffings and suggestions. X. Anaxagoras smiled his fine little smile of approval as his mind wandered back to the picture of the *Spindrift* at anchor in Coal Harbour with her meal pennants and absence flags and rigid nautical discipline.

There was, in the report of the day just described, a point which struck Marshall.

"I'm glad you reminded me," said he, "but there's the question of bribery and corruption. He's going to try that next, in spite of the admirable ideas of your loyalty you have implanted in his bosom. There is sure to be a weak member or so in any crew of men, you know; and if a man offers money enough, he's sure to get what he wants. I'm talking the way he figures it," he added, at a movement of protest from the men. "This is a serious matter with him, and when he gets worried enough he's going to bid high.

At least, I believe he will. Now, don't discourage him too much. Be a little receptive, so to speak. Let's see how anxious he is to get away. The amount he offers will be a good measure of it."

His audience saw this point, and brightened at the new opportunity it afforded.

"Furthermore," Marshall went on, "just to stimulate the bidding and make it a sporting proposition, I'll do this: when you have screwed him up to the highest possible figure, let me know the amount and I'll equal it. Sort of bonus, as you might say."

The men looked at each other uneasily. Finally Pierce spoke up.

"Speaking for myself, sir," said he, "I wouldn't like to do anything like that. It ain't—why should you—that is——"

"You don't have to be bribed to keep straight, and you don't want to be; is that it?" interrupted Marshall.

"That's it," agreed Pierce, gratefully, and a murmur of assent came from the others.

"That thought was not in my mind," replied Marshall. "I wouldn't have undertaken this job if I hadn't been sure of you men. We've shared a lot of weather together. But why not get this money, as long as it is being offered?"

"You mean us to take it and then double-cross him?" inquired Gates, doubtfully.

"Not at all. You find out the most he will offer and then refuse. I'll furnish the same amount to be divided among you."

"Why should you be out of pocket, sir?"

"Don't worry about that. I've intended to give you all

a bonus at the end of the voyage, but I hadn't decided on the exact amount. Here's a chance to make it a sporting proposition and get some fun out of it. That suit?"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

"All right; go to it! But see here, if you all suddenly turn crooked it won't be natural. Each crew better appoint one representative. And I'll add fifty dollars on my own account as a prize to the winning team."

They went to it. For thirty-six hours Eats-'em-alive was immensely cheered. He gathered that he had to do with people intensely suspicious of one another, that the boasted loyalty had, after all, its flaws if one only looked closely enough. It began to seem that he might get results after all; and by now he was almost frantically eager to get results. Rogg's picture of Marshall and his hint as to Tahiti were enough. Gone were his suspicions as to possible interference at the mine—or at least buried beneath a more pressing anxiety. He knew these rattle-brained damn fools. He was now completely assured that he had been kidnapped this far as a sample practical joke, and he moved in deadly fear lest those laughing hyenas might think it funny to take him farther. He must get out of their clutches before the idea occurred to them.

In his negotiations he encountered willingness but a healthy fear of the difficulties involved, and especially the risks and sacrifices.

"You see, sir," said Rogg, "it ain't going to be none too easy to sneak off." Rogg had been unanimously selected by his crew to act as their representative. It was justly felt that his imaginative showing to date had entitled him to

this distinction. The rival crew stoutly maintained, however, that his villainous countenance was quite sufficient to account for his being chosen. "We'd have to go in the dinghy and we'd have to go at night and get there by morning. And if we got caught I don't know what he'd do. Probably kill me." He cast a speculative eye on his auditors. "I don't know but he might kill you, too. When he gets real mad he does 'most anything. Of course, as soon as he got over his mad, he wouldn't do anything like that. Then, too, of course, I lose my job."

"Couldn't you get back quietly before morning and sneak aboard?" asked Eats-'em-alive.

"If I pulled that stunt, I wouldn't go back aboard that packet for a million dollars, *nohow*," asseverated Rogg, fervently.

A short silence fell.

"I'd give you a job," then said Eats-'em-alive.

"I don't take up with mining, sir. I belong on the sea. I'd lose my job, and I'd have to travel to a shipping port where I could get another. And I wouldn't get no such pay as I get aboard the *Spindrift*. So you see it wouldn't nohow pay you to give me what this would be worth."

"What would it be worth?" asked his victim.

But at this point Rogg grew vague. He conveyed that as far as principle was concerned he had no objections whatever, but that in all the circumstances attendant on this proposal he must refuse. He sympathized with the gentleman—he had been sorry for that banker fellow—for no one liked to be taken off to Tahiti, say, just for the sport of an erratic gentleman like Mr. Marshall; and he'd be glad

to help him if he could, but there it was. In other words, he left the gate open, and after due delay Eats-'em alive walked through it and began to bid.

Thus two more days passed, which made eight days as the total elapsed time since Arbuthnot's departure. That evening Rogg reported an even thousand dollars as the astonishing sum offered for his services. Pierce, the captain of the opposing team, was completely out of the running. Eats-'em-alive was concentrating on the man who seemed to him the most resourceful. On hearing the amount Marshall whistled.

"He's getting desperate," he commented. "Will he go any higher, do you think?"

"I think he's give it up, sir," answered Rogg. "I kind of have a notion he'd be willin' enough to pay more, but he figgers if I won't take a thousand I'm too scairt to take anything. A thousand dollars is a lot of money."

"Who called Rogg stupid!" murmured Betsy aside, in pardonable triumph.

"You're satisfied you've got all you can?" insisted Marshall. "Remember, it goes to you men if you can screw him up higher. Anybody else want a try?"

They shook their heads. If the admirable Rogg was satisfied, why so were they.

"All right," said Marshall. "Congratulations, I'll add the amount to your pay checks. Now all we have to do is to await the next move."

"What'll that be?" asked Betsy.

"I don't know, but I suspect."

"So do I," chimed in X. Anaxagoras.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE next move was inaugurated at daybreak the following morning. At that unearthly hour Fleshpots was routed, protesting, from his warm nest.

"We've got to get out of here," his partner cut short his expostulations. "If we don't we may find ourselves in serious trouble. A fine lot of lunatics we've fallen in with! They're sure to be ready to go in a day or so now. That dumb fool they call Rogg told me yesterday that the wind had fallen outside and the kicker ought to be back any minute."

"Then we'll get home, R. K.," complained Fleshpots.

"Maybe. I doubt it. That idiot Marshall was up in the dinghy yesterday and I didn't like the way he talked. Hell, I'm not going to argue; get up!"

"What are we going to do?" asked Fleshpots, obeying reluctantly.

"Walk," replied the other, briefly.

"We don't know the way."

"We don't need to. I heard them say it's only twelve miles. We will follow the coast."

"It'll be more than twelve miles by the coast."

"A little. Can't be much more. Call it twenty; what of it? Even if we make only two miles an hour we'll get there by the middle of the afternoon."

"Twenty! Oh, Lord!" groaned Fleshpots, forlornly. "They'll come up here and find we're gone, and they'll come after us."

"Let them. We'll have at least six hours start, and they won't know how we've gone anyway."

"I'll tell you," suggested Fleshpots, brightening. "I'll stay here, and when they come up I can stall them along by telling them you've gone fishing or something."

"And when that Marshall finds it out!" Eats-'em-alive pointed out, witheringly. "Don't argue. Get up and get busy."

A scant half hour later, which made it half-past three of the morning, the expedition had eaten breakfast and was ready. A substantial bundle of food, which Fleshpots carried, was the only equipment considered necessary. Though much dejected, he said no more in the way of expostulation. Eats-'em-alive did all the talking, and he did more of it than usual. Truth to tell he exhibited what amounted with him to a sort of sub-geniality, due mainly to the relief of direct action.

They waded the bayou in its shallows and plunged into the forest.

The Northwest coast boasts of very wet winters. From about the first of October until some time in May, it rains almost literally without cessation. On what they describe as a fine day the rain thins until it is what one might call a descending mist. There is, owing to the influence of the Japan current, comparatively little snow, except on the high mountains. As a consequence, the forest clothing is remarkably dense. Not only do the trees stand thickly,

but the undergrowth beneath them presents an abundance and variety to be found nowhere else, except perhaps in a tropical jungle; and underfoot and over rock and fallen tree is a thick, soft carpet of moss. Wherever, as at edges and in little openings, the summer sun and the outside air get their chance, there springs up a thick resilient screen of spiky salmonberry brush, elders, nettles, aspens, tall huckleberries, salal, and the like.

Within the forest itself the going is further complicated by two things. The first is that the country itself is built mostly of rock which stands on end at disconcerting slants, piles itself into angular heaps, humps itself into tall cliffs and ridges, and, finally, carefully camouflages its frequent crevices and interstices by the aforesaid moss. The second is that the numerous windfalls and dead trees—also moss covered—catch themselves across these humps and piles and protuberances of rock in jackstraw fashion, so that often the voyager has to crawl and flounder, worming his way through between logs set at all heights and angles, plunging waist deep in spiky salal at each alleged step; or else he has to walk a complicated pattern of tight rope sometimes twenty feet above the ground. To make it quite complete, the down timber, owing to the rains, decays very rapidly. The moss with which it is covered, however, preserves the roundness of its shape long after all substance has departed from it. Consequently, he who chooses the aërial route is quite likely to find himself trusting to a fair appearance that proves little more substantial than the empty air. In that case, he lands in the salal below. After he has done this a little while he begins to understand why

the country five miles from the coast remains wholly unexplored.

The experienced woodsman whose business requires him to do land travel in this country of fjords and gas boats pushes determinedly through the fringes and the low country and hits for the nearest mountain-side. There the going is steep and rocky and impeded enough, goodness knows; and the attractions above mentioned have by no means entirely disappeared. Still, it is more open; and one can, by much hard work, get along. But it requires one sound in wind and limb, strong and enduring, with an accuracy of eye and foot that comes only from accustomedness.

Our heroes had none of these things; and it never occurred to them to try to travel on a steep and seamed mountain-side when there was flat country nearer at hand. They progressed in the manner first indicated but without noticeable skill. Even at the very beginning they encountered difficulty. The brush had a way of collecting in front of them as they pushed against it until they were held across the waist by a species of wide belt or band of interwoven branches and tendrils. The wise man, at this point, presses the band downward until he can get one foot on it. The other fellow continues to press his weight against the constantly increasing resistance until at last, with a supreme effort, he breaks through—and generally falls flat on his face. This was the method adopted by Fleshpots. After he had done it some score of times for a total of sixty yards gain on the twenty-first down, he felt himself threatened with palpitation, rush of blood to his head, apoplexy, hardening of the arteries, and housemaid's knee. He told Eats-

'em-alive of this, but was treated with contumely and scorn. The latter had been following in the rear and could see nothing especially difficult in the travel. Indeed, he chided Fleshpots for lack of speed.

"Try it yourself," rejoined Fleshpots, with some remnant of spirit, mopping a streaming brow.

Eats-'em-alive stepped to the front. Ten feet farther brought them through the bordering brush screen.

"If you didn't allow yourself to get so fat you wouldn't find it so difficult," said he, scornfully, looking ahead with ill-based satisfaction on the apparently open woods. "Now we can hike out."

They advanced with childlike confidence on the second phase. There is nothing that more saps human vitality than the totally unexpected shift of bodily level. Witness stepping off the unanticipated last stair in the dark. That is a very slight shift and from one flat surface to another. Nevertheless, the shock, both physical and mental, is considerable and quite alters for the moment the victim's point of view as to a just cosmic order. The travellers found themselves continually altering their levels and with all requisite unexpectedness. When they were not plunging one leg deep down into a crack between two rocks quite hidden beneath a deceptive level of green moss, they were catching their equilibrium violently set awry by the diabolical rolling aside or tipping up of what looked to be an integral portion of the everlasting hills. Logs a foot through, to the top of which they stepped as one would step up a marble stairway, crumbled beneath the reaching foot and let them down staggering. Smooth lawn-

like expanses of ground pine or low salal proved to grow, not from level ground as it appeared, but out of a jagged, splintered miniature relief map of crevices, holes, and excrescences. Progress was a continued and heavy flounder, which is very hard on the human frame.

Things came very shortly to take on a curious quality of gratuitousness. They were to be resented because they were so unnecessary. *Why*, in the name of all that is holy, after ten minutes hard work making a way through a salal thicket, did a small cliff have to go and stick itself just there, so they had to retrace their steps and pass above it? It wasn't fair; and it somehow was done on purpose! And why in Sam Hill were there so many things to step up on or step over? The muscles on the front of Fleshpot's legs ached; his feet weighed a ton. And it wasn't as if, once having done it, the thing was over. Just the same sort of thing insisted on repeating itself, senselessly, without rhyme or reason.

Another curious phenomenon also immediately made itself evident. On the river it had been actually cold: Fleshpots had shrunk from the wading of the little bayou. Here in the confines of the forest it was hotter than any hammam had ever dreamed of being. The air was imprisoned in the trees. It did not stir even in the faintest eddy, but hung motionless, sucking up, and retaining in suspension, every drop of hot sunlight that found its way through the frond. Fleshpots gasped and perspired. The sweat ran down his forehead and into his eyes and made them smart. His garments were wet through, as though

he had fallen into the river. Yet, when he stopped for rest and bared his brow, there was in the superheated air no refreshment. On the contrary, he seemed to sweat harder than ever, as an automobile engine heats up when the car comes to a standstill.

Nevertheless, they did make progress, and thanks to the grim determination of Eats-'em-alive, they continued to do so. Left to himself, Fleshpots would have lain down and died. It did not take much of this to convince him that he was going to die, all right; but in the presence of his grim partner he did not dare lie down.

There is a limit, however, and at last he called a halt.

"I've got to rest," he panted. "My God, this is tough going."

He looked at his watch, then held it to his ear.

"What time you got?" he asked

"Five o'clock," replied the other.

"My Lord!" ejaculated Fleshpots, blankly, "I thought it must be nearly noon!"

You have all read stories of Over the Great Ice where our heroes struggle heroically on long beyond the point where the normal powers have been expended; or of the grim Traverse of the Torturing Desert across whose searing face the little black specks stagger until human strength can no longer hold them upright, when they proceed to crawl; or of the men in the small boat rowing on and on long after their fingers are so cramped on the oars that they cannot let go, their minds blank, only an indomitable spirit forcing them instinctively on. In these stories there is always one

grim he-man who not only carries on long after any rational being would have seen that there was no hope, but who also draws from some hidden source of strength the will power to keep all his companions going, too, so that at last the whole bunch is triumphantly snatched from the very jaws of death. I am sure you must have read many of them: everybody has. That fact simplifies my present task. Just take the most fearful of these stories and multiply it by N. Let Fleshpots represent the fainting and despairing multitude and Eats-'em-alive the non-quitting hero. That will give you a faint idea.

There is one element in the said stories that must not be forgotten. Invariably, there is the glimpse of hope that leads them on. Sometimes it is the fleeting vision of the golden-haired girl leaning over the garden gate while the bees swarm in the honeysuckle; sometimes it is a ditto ditto of a gray-haired mother placidly reading the mortgage by the chimney corner; sometimes, I suspect, it is a vision of a long, cool one, with the foam just dripping over the edge of the glass and the frosted beads standing—at any rate, there has to be something there with a kick in it to revive the fainting spirit at the exact and psychological moment. In this case, it happened to be an occasional glimpse of blue water to the right through chance openings of the trees. That indicated they were indeed going down the coast.

At noon, they rested for an hour. This saved Eats-'em-alive from becoming liable to a charge of manslaughter. Perhaps it would have been murder: I don't know. The difference between manslaughter and murder is that the latter comprehends premeditation. The accumulated ob-

stinacies and resistances of nature had by now rendered the meditations of Eats-'em-alive a shade unethical. Fleshpots could not eat. He lay on his back, somewhat glassy-eyed, for three quarters of an hour of rest. Then he managed to arouse himself for a question.

"How far have we come?" he asked.

Eats-'em-alive was physically in little better case than his companion. Though leaner, he was also older and by nature less physically robust. His face was gray with fatigue, and his hands had begun to tremble. For a moment he did not reply, then glanced at the collapsed jelly fish below him and thought better of it.

"We've been gone about eight hours," said he, briefly.

Fleshpot's dulled brain took ten seconds to circle slowly the simple calculation.

"Then we've got only four miles yet," he said, brightening perceptibly.

"I don't believe we've come two miles an hour."

"Oh!" commented Fleshpots, and fell eight thousand feet into a black abyss.

"No. But we must be a good deal more than halfway."

"Halfway!" echoed Fleshpots, feebly. His body seemed not so much to relax as to disintegrate into complete inertia.

"I can't make it."

The statement seemed to arouse Eats-'em-alive to a species of berserker fury. There comes a point in the stories, as you will remember, when the cast-iron hero has to use brutal measures—in all kindness, of course—to lash the expiring vitality of his charges to the last superhuman effort. Omitting the kindness, this was the place. Gal-

vanized into activity, Fleshpots, groaning, staggered to his feet and stumbled on. Only one comfort he demanded, and he begged it whimperingly.

"How far *do* you think we've come?"

Eats-'em-alive, with a moment of sense, answered him seriously.

"We can't have made less than a mile and a half an hour —why, a man walks four miles an hour on a road. We must have come twelve miles. Come on."

They proceeded. Now, it is a curious fact that the half in miles of a long journey is far from being an actual half of the journey, and that for a very simple reason: after a certain number of the things, miles increase in length by arithmetical ratio. Geographers and surveyors will deny this, but it is so, as any traveller will attest. Fleshpots, and to a slightly lesser degree his companion, found this out before another hour had passed. So much in danger of complete smash and disintegration had the expedition now come that, in spite of himself, Eats-'em-alive was reduced to making encouraging remarks; and it was significant that they were now addressed to and as much needed by himself as his partner.

"There's the water again," he voiced one of these.

At that moment they were fairly up the slope of a side hill, for the simple reason that at this point the flat had been pinched out by the mountains, which fell sheer into the sea; and an intervening cliff had forced them to ascend. The dense forest here thinned somewhat, so that through the tops of the trees below them they could here and there obtain a glimpse of the blue.

"There's a boat there!" he cried, after a moment. "Perhaps we can get them——" He stopped abruptly and pressed his hands before his eyes. "It looks like—— By God, it's that damned yacht! How did she come here?"

Fleshpot's waning life flickered into flame. He stepped forward a few feet for a clear view.

"Yes," he said. "That's her, all right! And she's here because she's been here all the time. There's the marsh at the mouth of the river. You're a hell of a guide, you are! You haven't even started!"

"It can't be," muttered Eats-'em-alive.

"You've been going around in a circle," accused Fleshpots, bitterly.

Eats-'em-alive was staring with all his eyes and muttering to himself. He knew he had not been going around in a circle; there was the sun, and the mountains always at his left. He knew his watch was right in telling him that they had already been moving nearly nine hours. He knew they had been moving steadily, and that even the slowest movement must have covered at lowest calculations ten miles in that length of time. Yet there was the *Spindrift* floating like a toy, and there were the well-remembered marsh grasses of the river. For a moment his brain reeled as though it suspected it had been made the victim of some hideous enchantment. Eats-'em-alive was too far gone to realize that, though the two had indeed travelled in fact considerably more than ten miles, that most of that distance had been expended in going straight up and down. A graph of their progress would have more resembled a fever char

than the optimistic ideal depicted on a railroad map. The two sank heavily to a log and stared at each other for one tense moment.

Then Fleshpots burst suddenly into tears. He looked like a fat and very red baby.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE river expedition that day was accompanied by both Marshall and X. Anaxagoras, and went upstream somewhat earlier than the usual hour. They exhibited no surprise whatever at discovering the camp to be deserted; nor did they meet the eager expectations of the crew for the day, who had hoped to be led out on the trail like a pack of bloodhounds. Indeed, after determining by a very brief examination of signs easily to be read that their former guests had not crossed the river to the north, they returned to the yacht, where they made themselves comfortable under the after awning. It was a glassy, still day, rather hot for the latitude and the time of year. The wide bay reflected the shores and the waterfowl as though polished. There were no sounds except the continued wild crying of the gulls and the deep roar of distant waterfalls as they tumbled off the mountains. At eleven o'clock they went swimming off the yacht. An early lunch they caused to be served on deck. After lunch they sprawled in lazy chairs smoking in a somnolent and comfortable silence. At last Marshall raised his hand to listen.

"It sounds," said he, "exactly like a bull moose breaking through the brush."

The sounds to which he referred were as yet in the distance and subdued thereby; but within a brief half hour

X. Anaxagoras saw fit to amend his companion's observation.

"More like an elephant breaking his way through the jungle," said he.

They lay back with luxurious sighs. From the forest now plainly could be heard a continuous crackling, tearing noise, punctuated by an occasional mighty crash or a more muffled thump. This centre of disturbance appeared to be slowly progressing parallel with the shore.

"Just to think!" spoke up Betsy, out of a long, dreamy silence. "While we're sitting here so cool and comfortable, all over the world poor devils are sweating and slaving."

Nothing more was said. The three figures in the lazy chairs relaxed still more. The casual observer would have said they had not a thought among them; but a keener student of mental chemistry might have been puzzled to have analysed in their mood more than a trace of what he must label malicious enjoyment.

At length Marshall yawned, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and arose to saunter across the deck.

"Oh, Benton," he called. "Just turn out the cutter crew, will you? Coming along, Sid?" he asked his brother-in-law.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE two fugitives continued for some moments to sit on the fallen tree. Eats-'em-alive stared down at the yacht. Fleshpots had ceased to weep, but he had not troubled to brush aside the tears which still lay on his fat cheeks. He made no internal effort whatever, but his sterner companion was slowly gathering himself after what looked like a knock-out blow.

"We've plenty of food,' he said at last. "It doesn't matter if we don't get there to-day. As soon as we get by this river jungle we'll go down to the beach. We'll get there in time."

Fleshpots made no reply. He had nothing left in him with which to make reply. But when at the end of an interval Eats-'em-alive arose and said, "Come on," Fleshpots did not stir. He did not even look up.

"Come on, I tell you," repeated the other.

To all appearance Fleshpots had ceased to function as a volitional creature. He breathed, and presumably the other absolutely vital functions went on in his interior, but without doubt at a greatly retarded rate, as do those of the hibernating animals. It is possible that Fleshpots was indeed hibernating through this winter of discontent. He did not reply; he did not look up; he did not even appear to have heard. Eats'-em-alive spoke commandingly;

he spoke harshly; he spoke encouragingly; he even spoke appealingly; he ended by wasting considerable vital energy in a burst of anger. No go. He would have obtained as much response by addressing the small hemlock to his left. Fleshpots did not even arise to the negation of active mental resistance. He depended on his avoirdupois. Finally Eats-'em-alive jerked him by the arm and kicked him. No flicker even of recognition that he was there. He drew aside and surveyed his companion with despair.

"Go to the devil, then!" he fairly shouted. "I'm through with you! Stay here and rot if you want to: I'm going!"

He turned to execute this threat, and came face to face with Marshall and X. Anaxagoras.

The two young men sauntered nonchalantly out of a small stand of firs. They looked cool and collected and beautiful in white flannels and pipe-clayed shoes.

"Hullo," drawled Marshall, "lovely in the woods, isn't it? Out for a little stroll? Nothin' like keepin' fit with a little exercise once in a while. Fellow gets soft sittin' around." He produced and lighted a cigarette and leaned gracefully against a tree. "But you don't want to overdo it," he continued. "Distances fool you when you're havin' a good time. Chap always forgets he's got to go the same distance to get back home again."

This light conversational remark accomplished what Eats-'em-alive had signally failed to do. A long, low wail indicated that Fleshpots's much submerged consciousness had been reached.

"Better let us give you a lift back in the cutter," urged Marshall. "No trouble at all. You can go walkin' again to-morrow."

The figure on the fallen tree stirred and struggled feebly to its feet. The first portion of the suggestion had met with his unqualified approval. As to the latter portion, it fatally conflicted with a resolution that had not been taken, but slowly grown as grows the granite in the hills, namely and to wit, that never, in any circumstances, anywhere again would he walk at all; not while motor cars, or street cars, or—yes, by gosh—wheel chairs still functioned. Marshall surveyed him with a mingled air of amusement and a trace of pity; then produced a small silver flask which he silently offered.

Fleshpots seized it with what might be called candid eagerness and raised it to his lips. After a long interval he lowered it with a sigh. Marshall shook it next his ear.

"Sorry, old sportsman," he told Eats-'em-alive. "It seems to be all gone."

The two yachtsmen turned down the slope, and the others, without a word, stumbled after. At the beach they huddled into the stern sheets where Fleshpots promptly fell into a comatose stupor. Marshall and X. Anaxagoras faced them from the thwart next forward. Marshall was chatty.

"Nice calm weather now after the blow," he observed. "Arbuthnot ought to be back to-morrow or next day. Been a long time."

"Too damn long," growled Eats-'em-alive, whose fatigue

had rendered him incautious. "The whole thing is outrageous."

"Anxious to get back?" queried Marshall, softly.

"I ought never to have been away. I didn't want to come on this fool expedition anyway," said Eats-'em-alive, resentfully.

"No good to take things hard," soothed Marshall. "When a man gets in a hurry, and thinks things can't get along without him, and all that sort of thing, he ought to just drop everything and go away for a while. That's the way I do it. Then when he gets back he finds things are all right after all, and he knows better next time."

"That's all very well for men like you who haven't any responsibilities," snorted Eats-'em-alive. "What do you know about it?"

"Lots. I've seen it tried. Nothin' like it. There's no great hurry about things. They get along all right even if you don't hurry. If you don't believe it, you ought to see how they do things in Tahiti."

The word rang an alarm bell in the brain of Eats-'em-alive. He looked up quickly to encounter Marshall's gaze. It seemed to him at once impish and speculative.

"I guess you're right," he hastened, with a sudden and ludicrous softening of manner. He cast about for something else to say that should be both reassuring and antidotal to fool notions. His tired mind could conjure up nothing; but he had forgotten his tired body in a panic of uneasiness.

The cutter ascended the river, slid into the bayou, and landed its human freight. Fleshpots had to be carried.

The half pint of whisky, added to the horrors of the day, had resulted in a merciful oblivion. They put him to bed.

"Touch of the sun, perhaps," Marshall suggested. "Mean thing. Possibly he won't be well enough to travel."

"He'll be well enough," stated Eats-'em-alive, with emphasis; then caught himself and added a feeble, "I'm sure."

The cutter returned to the yacht and her occupants embarked.

"I think," observed Marshall, reflectively, "that our little lambs will not again stray from the fold. To-morrow we'll send the kicker to Kinsey Landing. If Arbuthnot caught the first boat, he should be there."

CHAPTER XXXIV

ARBUTHNOT proved to have caught the first boat, and arrived late in the afternoon. From a distance he made gestures intended to convey assurance. This he confirmed even before his foot had touched the deck.

"We've got them stopped!" he said, as he ascended. "As far as that is concerned everything went through as though oiled. But I'm not so sure about the legal end of it!"

"Glad to see you back. Take that chair. Have a drink?" urged Marshall. "Well, go to it!"

"We're dying to hear," supplemented Betsy.

"Thanks," said Arbuthnot, taking the chair and reaching for the drink. "Well, at first Mrs. Maxon hardly wanted to hear about it, but she read your letter over three times, and finally I got her attention. At first I simply assured her that the property she knew about was on no account to be disturbed. Finally, when she really seemed to be listening, I went more into details—about these fellows I mean, and what we'd done about it. That interested her. Then I sketched our idea. She became quite cheerful and resigned. 'Anything he says,' said she. She wrote you this," said he, handing X. Anaxagoras a letter. "I tried to get her to sign a legal release, but she wouldn't hear of it. It's as you said: she's very

touchy on the whole matter. I could only go so far. I was afraid she'd break down and shy off completely. She didn't want to hear of it at all. She just insisted it was all right if you said so, and to tell you to do what seemed best to you."

Arbuthnot paused to fill and light his pipe.

"She's a beautiful woman; a most remarkable woman," he added, thoughtfully. "I saw her a number of times." He looked up to catch Betsy's eyes, and a slow flush mounted under his tan. "I was trying to get her to sign a legal release," he continued quickly. "That's the only weak point: we ought to have legal permission. But I couldn't come to it."

"It isn't necessary: it's quite all right," said X. Anaxagoras.

"I'm glad you think so," returned Arbuthnot, doubtfully.

"You see," the Healer of Souls told them, blandly, "I myself own a share of the mine."

The others stared at him.

"I grubstaked Maxon and lent him some money for development. Of course, I expected no such return, but he insisted so strongly that I finally took it. Of course, I should never have taken any steps against Mrs. Maxon's wishes. Though I am a minority owner only, nevertheless, that fact obviates the necessity of legal permission."

"How about the adjoining property?" interposed Marshall.

Arbuthnot chuckled.

"You called the turn there," said he. "It was vacant.

I started the necessary business through your lawyers, and by this time, I was assured, it would be safely in your name."

"It seems complete," observed Marshall, with satisfaction.

"The only puzzling thing," continued Arbuthnot, "and the only thing that seemed to arouse Mrs. Maxon's real interest, was the question of the notebook. Until I told her I had it in my possession, she did not even know it was gone. She was much astonished and could not believe it until she had searched through all her belongings. She cannot imagine how it ever got away from her; or indeed how any one could know of its existence, even."

"That is indeed an interesting point," agreed X. Anaxagoras, "and we must try to clear it up."

"There only remains," observed Betsy, with happy anticipation, "to break the glad tidings."

"To-morrow," decided X. Anaxagoras. "Physical exhaustion blunts the receptive faculties, especially on the day following an effort, and it seems to me desirable that the receptive faculties of our friends should be at their keenest in order that no savour of the situation may be lost. To-morrow morning we will visit our friends up river."

"Me, too, this time," Betsy put in her claim.

"It may not be entirely seemly at times."

"It will be sufficiently decorous," promised Marshall, with a certain grimness. "I'm through monkeying with that gang. And if you don't mind, I'd like to handle this."

"By all means," murmured X. Anaxagoras, languidly. "Turmoil and strife are foreign to my peace-loving disposition. But as interested spectator I add my claim to that of my beloved sister."

"I think we should all go!" cried Betsy, inspired. "Everybody! It isn't fair otherwise. The men, too, I mean. They're just as much interested as we are, and they've done their parts nobly."

"All right," asserted Marshall, "bring 'em along, the whole kit and caboodle."

"I'm going to take Noah and Roggsy, too," stated Betsy. "It will be a lesson to them."

CHAPTER XXXV

THE following morning saw the *Spindrift* quite deserted, to the great scandal of Benton, who thought that at least an anchor watch should be left aboard. In the cutter were oarsmen, Betsy, Marshall, X. Anaxagoras, and Arbuthnot. The kicker accommodated the rest of the crew. The men were in their dress whites. The kicker towed the empty dinghy. True to her promise Betsy had brought the two animals. Noah, quite accustomed to boat expeditions, purred contentedly in her lap: Roggsy perched on Rogg's shoulder. On the way up river Marshall, as commander in chief of the punitive expedition, voiced his instructions.

"Now, I'd suggest," said he, "that we drop the utter-damn-fool rôle. We're dealing with a pair of crooks."

"One of them's a kind of appealing little crook," murmured Betsy.

"We'll see how appealing he may prove to be when he hears the sad news," said Marshall, with a sardonic grin. "That reminds me, Rogg, you and Pierce stand near by, and if I give you the signal, gag the brutes—I mean, make them stop talking. There won't be any rough stuff, but in the excitement of the moment they might forget there are ladies present."

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded Rogg, heartily.

"Aren't we going to have any more fun out of it?" queried Betsy, plaintively.

"Leave that to me," replied her husband. He was bubbling with anticipation; but as the cutter rounded the bend and came in sight of the camp, he sobered to a business-like gravity. "On your marks!" he warned.

Eats-'em-alive and Fleshpots had partially recovered from their excursion of two days before. At least, the receptive faculties mentioned by X. Anaxagoras were in full working order. They arose and came down to the beachlet, puzzled by this invasion in force. That the kicker had returned from its alleged journey had of course been for some moments evident; and now Arbuthnot's presence revealed itself. Curiously enough, of the two it was Eats-'em-alive rather than Fleshpots who gave the greeting. This was the fashion in which his uneasiness expressed itself. Fleshpots had not yet regained his resiliency and looked like a dejected cherub.

"Hullo!" Eats-'em-alive greeted them with a cracked cordiality like a ghostly echo of Fleshpots's former manner. "Got back at last, I see."

No one replied. The two boats beached simultaneously. Simultaneously the men stepped out, half on either side, into the shallow water, marched in four files with military precision and measured step straight up the bank, diverged at an angle at the top, halted, made a smart left turn, and stood rigid, forming thus a wide V within whose arms was the camp.

"If George M. Cohan could see that!" murmured Betsy under her breath.

"Hush up!" warned Marshall under his.

"Somebody ought to sing about Dear Old Glory," returned Betsy, unimpressed, but in the same tone.

"*Will* you hush up!" repeated Marshall. "Don't spoil things. But I will say it's pretty good for only one rehearsal."

"So *that's* what all that shuffling was last night on deck. It kept me awake. What next?"

"Sit still: I'll tell you when."

Benton had not debarked with the crew. He now uprose, a fine square figure of a man in his neat officer's uniform, stepped ashore, walked solidly down the V, and took his place just inside the apex.

"Come on," Marshall gave the signal.

"Do we salute or anything?" Betsy clutched at him eagerly.

"Certainly not," Marshall whispered, rapidly, "just come ashore."

They stepped ashore. Marshall ignored the dumbfounded two. Betsy smiled sweetly and proffered a good-morning to which she received in response only a gulp. This was contributed by Fleshpots. Eats-'em-alive was too much occupied by his emotions, which were mixed. They consisted of relief, uncertainty, rage, puzzlement, apprehension, and thoughts of Tahiti in chemical, not merely mechanical, mixture. As the company ascended the small bank, Eats-'em-alive and Fleshpots slowly followed. Marshall for the first time seemed to become aware of their existence. His manner was crisp and forceful but informed by an elaborately ironical politeness.

Gone were the drawl and the vagueness, and with them, in some manner, had vanished the soft quality from his undeniable good looks.

"I have news for you," said he, addressing Eats-'em-alive. "It may, perhaps, prove to be disconcerting news, but I beg you will give it your intellectual and not your emotional consideration."

"What the dev——" began Eats-'em-alive; and swallowed. A vision of coconut palms and dusky forms swaying to the beat of a drum beneath the swooning tropical moon while the surf broke and fell on the silver strand inhibited the rest. This had all the earmarks of the most gigantic of practical jokes. Another vision flashed before him with drowning-man rapidity; that of a barred window and a heavily padded room and Marshall chained to a ring in the wall making paper dolls. But it did not seem to comfort him much. Marshall now included Fleshpots in his attention.

"My dear sirs," he continued, elaborately, "I bring you the glad tidings that at last, after this long delay, which I assure you I regret as much as yourselves, you are at entire liberty to depart at any moment for whatever part of the globe you may select. No matter where, even though your fancy should turn to the icy mountains of Greenland or the coral strands of India—or," he added, "Tahiti. I feel I have caused you much inconvenience and I would make amends, so I insist on presenting you with tickets—quite complimentary—and on prepaying your expenses. You need feel under no obligation. It is but slight return for the service you have rendered us."

Something in Marshall's manner rather than in his fantastic speech held his hearers dumb for a moment. There must have been in it a ring of sincerity, for Eats-'em-alive almost instantly recovered; and the bread-fruit-flashing-spray-coral-strand vision faded away.

"I want to go back to my mine, and immediately," he said, with all his old harshness. "What new tomfoolery is this?"

"Ah," said Marshall, with a shade of delicate regret, "that, I should have stated, is the only exception! To anywhere else in the whole wide world it would be my deepest pleasure to—ah—deport you." He paused for an instant for the effect. Eats-'em-alive tautened and became warily watchful. Fleshpots, though physically he remained as rotund as ever, seemed to collapse like a pricked balloon. "On the property you mention you are at present trespassing and cannot be permitted to continue to do so."

"Trespassing, you fool!" Eats-'em-alive found his voice. "That property——"

"Belongs to me," interposed Marshall, sweetly. "Unfortunately, before beginning your admirable operations, you neglected the small formality of filing on it. I discovered this omission and, through Mr. Arbuthnot, filed on it myself."

"So that's it!" roared Eats-'em-alive. "Claim jumping, eh? Well, let me tell you, young man, you'll find it's not so simple. You will find out there are such things as courts of equity as well as courts of law before you're through. You can't get away with that stuff! As for

you"—he glared at Arbuthnot—"you traitorous——"

"Rogg! Pierce!" spoke up Marshall.

The two huge sailors stepped briskly to either elbow of Eats-'em-alive and looked inquiringly toward their skipper.

"We will confine ourselves to the subject in hand," said Marshall, crisply. "In fact, I'll do the talking here. Another word out of you and I'll have you gagged." He paused for a moment; then continued in his former manner. "You will go back to the mine," he said, with an air of concession, "but only for the purpose of packing what personal belongings you may have left there and to inform your amiable Oriental confrère that the game is up—*fini*. Then I should be happy to send you to your courts of equity, should you so desire, or to the law courts—or the criminal courts. But the mine must thereafter be a prudently closed chapter in your lives. Give due consideration, please, to my use of the word prudent, for I am sure we will wish to continue to the end our charming relations. There is no sense in facing the inevitable disagreeably. All consideration will be shown you in your temporary return to the scene of your regrettable miscalculations. Now, if you have anything to say, the floor is yours provided you remember that my wife is present."

"You'll do as you please, I suppose," said Eats-'em-alive, blackly, "but you haven't heard the last of it. And," he could not forbear adding with a sneer, "if you make your high-handed claim jumping stick, much good may it do you!"

Marshall looked at him steadily.

"I see I will have to speak plainly," he said, after a moment. "I know perfectly well that there is nothing on that claim; and I know perfectly well where the expected profits lie. Make your mind easy there."

"Well, you'll never get it, then, no more than I," snarled Eats-'em-alive, with a certain malignant satisfaction, "and let me tell you, if you try it, you'll find that somebody has blown on you. Two can work at that, my friend—you and your swell plant!" He cast a withering glance at the immaculate sailors in their white uniforms.

"Pardon!" X. Anaxagoras spoke up, stepping forward, "I wish to remove a slight misapprehension due to a mistake in introducing me under the name of Tomlinson. Permit me to present my card."

Eats-'em-alive stared at the bit of pasteboard for a full twenty seconds, then dashed it to the ground with a howl of rage.

"The grubstaker!" he yelled. "Of all the——"

"Precisely," X. Anaxagoras interrupted him coolly and with a decisive gesture that imposed silence. "Returned from India, to which country, no doubt, your careful foresight had traced him. The part owner for whose benefit you have so kindly constructed the admirable underground workings which cannot but prove of great value in our future operations."

Eats-'em-alive turned toward Arbuthnot, who stood in the background.

"I'll get you for this, young man," he promised, with savage deadliness.

"You'll get nobody for anything," interposed Marshall,

sharply. "Understand that once and for all. A complete record of this case will always be on file available for the proper authorities, and complete means of identification—even," he added, with a relishing pride, "to a set of fingerprints you have obligingly but unconsciously made for us from time to time. Say," he said, dropping all mannerism whatever, "do you two realize that you are common or garden crooks and we've got you with the goods on?"

The men before him experienced a curious sensation as of being held in a vise and compelled to look down a long vista. It lasted but a second. Marshall had turned to X. Anaxagoras, who was leaning against a tree. "My dear fellow, may I trouble you for a match?" he requested, fumbling in his pocket for his pipe. But he did not light it. The pent-up fury of Eats-'em-alive broke out. He was quite reckless of consequences. Thwarted hopes, resentment of indignities, oppositions, chafings of spirit, and helplessness burst from him in alternate purple and blinding blasphemies. So sudden and spectacular was the explosion that for an appreciable time nobody could gather his wits. Marshall stared, his pipe half raised to his lips: Rogg and Pierce, within hand touch on either side, stood paralysed. X. Anaxagoras raised his hand quietly.

"Stop it," he commanded, without raising his voice.

Eats-'em-alive stopped it. Absolute silence fell.

"Pardon me," said X. Anaxagoras, smoothly, "your emotion is natural, but its expression ill-timed. I can well understand your aggravation and disappointment, not only at your plans going so signally awry, but also at what must amount to a considerable financial loss. You

must have spent a considerable sum. We will examine your books. I presume you have kept a record of your expenditures. You will be reimbursed for whatever Mr. Arbuthnot, who will be my engineer, decides can be taken over for our purposes."

"Oh, I say! Sid!" expostulated Marshall

"I prefer it that way," insisted X. Anaxagoras.

"It's quixotic!"

"I feel greatly indebted to these gentlemen for having evolved so simple an expedient. Permit me: I will feel better about it."

"It's your funeral," grumbled Marshall, "but I wouldn't do it! I think they're lucky we don't put them in jail."

X. Anaxagoras smiled finely and turned away from Eats-'em-alive to address Fleshpots. The latter, quite crushed, and with a look of almost comical alarm on his fat face, had taken no part in the foregoing.

"Thus," X. Anaxagoras continued, "you can return to your friends able to substantiate whatever fictional material you may care to inflict upon them. Clear field ahead," he said, with a shade of kindness in his voice. "Better move straight in it."

Fleshpots choked and looked as though he were going to cry again.

"I—I appreciate this," he managed at last, "and you bet your life I'll run straight."

"It was your money, wasn't it?" asked X. Anaxagoras.

The fat man nodded, unable to trust his voice.

X. Anaxagoras turned again to Eats-'em-alive.

"In common justice, I must clear up one last point.

Your engineer has not double-crossed you, as you believe. Through grubstaking the owner of the mine and through certain financial advances I became, as I see Maxon's notebook has informed you, part owner of his claim. This interest I have never actively considered, owing to friendship for the family. I find you at work preparing to steal it. Observing one obviously honest man in your charming group I confide to him the situation. Not wishing to be accessory after the fact, he kindly volunteered to procure the necessary evidence. That's all there is to it. Quite simple."

To this Eats-'em-alive vouchsafed no comment. X. Anaxagoras waited a moment, then turned away. He turned back again as though struck by a sudden idea.

"By the way, it's absurd, of course, but I can't help asking. Of course, your name isn't Maxon, but I have no curiosity as to that. But by the remotest chance in the world you don't happen to be a—real-estate man, do you?" he asked, hopefully.

"What's it to you?" growled Eats-'em-alive. "Find out, if you can!"

"It would gratify me so much if you were," murmured X. Anaxagoras.

"Well, I'm not," sneered Eats-'em-alive. He glanced toward Fleshpots.

"I'm not now," said the latter, "but I was once, if that helps any. But why?"

X. Anaxagoras looked past the bewildered Marshall toward Betsy with a smile of triumph.

"It does, thank you," said he. "It assures a prophet honour in his own country."

CHAPTER XXXVI

THEY all returned to the yacht in the kicker, leaving the cutter and dinghy to strike camp and follow. Nothing was said until they reached the deck. Eats-'em-alive was merely morose as a badger. Fleshpots, on the contrary, though silent like the rest, had that peculiar air of subdued eagerness which characterizes an enthusiastic dog that has done wrong, has been chided therefor, is suitably abashed, but from a humble attitude watches eagerly with experimentally questioning tail for the first sign of relenting.

Marshall led the way to the cabin.

"It is early in the day," he observed, courteously, "but in all the circumstances, a drink might be in order."

Eats-'em-alive made no response, but retired to the transom of the little cabin where he stretched himself out full length and closed his eyes. Fleshpots frisked the least little bit of a frisk, then instantly became abject again until he could see how it took.

"That listens good to me," was the frisk, uttered almost with the old-time manner.

It seemed to take all right. The attitude of the three men was quite matter of fact, almost as though nothing had happened. Betsy was removing her hat before a small mirror.

"It really feels as though it were going to be hot to-day," she threw over her shoulder, casually.

Marshall set out a bottle of Scotch, a carafe of water, and some glasses.

"Say when," he advised Fleshpots. His tone was quite friendly. He poured himself a small drink, passed the bottle to Arbuthnot, and sat down luxuriously beside him and opposite Fleshpots. "Here's how!" he said, raising his glass.

"Drink hearty!" returned Fleshpots, jovially. He ran deliriously three times around the lawn, chased his tail rapidly for a moment, then flopped down, his mouth open in doggy good fellowship. Barring a trifling error of judgment, now happily in a rapidly to be forgotten past, all was right with the world.

X. Anaxagoras had not seated himself but, glass in hand, was wandering back and forth. He stopped, finally, opposite the recumbent figure on the transom.

"There's only one thing I'd like to know," said he. "Of course I can't insist on it; indeed, our position as hosts forbids my insisting on it, but I would greatly esteem your confidence in us to the extent of explaining how you obtained your knowledge of the mine."

"You be damned!" returned Eats-'em-alive, without opening his eyes.

X. Anaxagoras sighed.

"Ah, well, it is of slight present importance," he said, "and I appreciate your reticent nature. Of course, I can obtain the information later. I merely thought the narrative would enliven our wait and perhaps save ourselves

considerable trouble—and yourselves some risk—of later investigation. As you will." He turned away. "However," he added, over his shoulder, "your friend here is a man of the world with social charm and experience; perhaps he will favour us."

He strolled across the cabin, seized the bottle, poured a drink, and with the graceful gesture of a presiding officer who provides a speaker with the usual materials, set it and the water carafe before Fleshpots.

"You have the floor," said he, and seated himself.

"Hear, hear!" cried Betsy, taking another chair.

Marshall applauded vociferously. "Speech! Speech!" he cried.

Fleshpots's blood, which had run decidedly cold, was running warm again. The first drink, which was no slouch of a drink, be it said, was hazing over agreeably any slight bumps and inequalities of the smooth past. The effect was to remove it all to a remote impersonal distance. And it was evident that the real villain of the piece lay over there on the transom. Fleshpots had a vague alcoholic impression that he was more sinned against than sinning. He had been led into this thing. Weak, perhaps; but who of us but has at times a momentary weakness? These people evidently looked on it that way. The difference in their treatment of him and that devil over there proved that. And the influence of an expectant audience worked on the natural instincts of the after-dinner speaker. He sipped the fresh drink and fumbled in his pocket. Marshall instantly passed him a cigar.

"Thanks," murmured Fleshpots, accepting it and striking

a match. "Do you know, folks," he said, after a minute, "believe it or not, this is the first crooked deal I ever tackled, and, so help me, it will be the last. I got into the thing and I couldn't let go; but never again, believe me! It shows," said he, philosophically, "that a man ought to stick to his own game. Any chump ought to know that, but we all got to learn once, anyway. Well, I've learned!" He wagged his head. "That's always been my advice to a young fellow making a start, '*Stick to what you know*'; and here I go and do it myself!" He sipped again at his drink. "But it did look good the way he"—he nodded toward his ex-partner—"put it up. Why, folks, it looked like a cinch; it was absolutely airtight! Not a chance in the world for things to go wrong—according to *him!* It sure did look like easy money the way he doped it out."

"There is always the unknown factor," murmured X. Anaxagoras.

"You said a mouthful! But tell me," he asked, "is the thing itself on the level? Is it as rich as he made out?"

"Oh, yes, the gold is there all right."

"It looked straight," returned Fleshpots, with relief. "I wasn't a boob there, anyway. And looked like the scheme was good, too. Oh, I didn't go into it with my eyes shut." He shook his head. "I don't know really whether I was a boob at all. There's luck in any game. I thought I checked her all up pretty careful before I went in. It would have gone all right if you hadn't happened along. Say, I wish you'd tell me; was it just luck you came, or did you know?"

"It was not just luck," replied X. Anaxagoras, with an amused smile, "but I did not know."

Fleshpots puzzled over this a moment.

"I don't quite get you," he confessed at last.

"I could not explain it to you in a few words. It has to do with certain cosmic correspondences of what one might call receptive effort toward existing needs."

"I expect so," said Fleshpots, vaguely. "Was it anything *he* might have figured out if he'd been on to his job?"

"If," X. Anaxagoras assured him, gravely, "he had really been on to his job as a human entity, he might very readily have figured it out."

"*Never play the other man's game!*" repeated Fleshpots, earnestly. "Look where it darn near landed me!"

"You were going to tell us how you got on to it," Marshall reminded him.

"Why, it was this way," began Fleshpots, with the relish of the born raconteur. "I got on to the thing, but I didn't think much about it except that it was a good yarn until he came along and doped it all out and sold me the idea. I had a little money handy just then, so I said I'd put that in, and he would run it, and we'd divide three ways with Hwang Tso. He doped it out that we'd need——"

"We know all that," interrupted X. Anaxagoras. "What we want to know is how did you get on to the story of the mine, and where did you get hold of that notebook?"

"You do?" queried Fleshpots, amazed. "Where did you get that?"

"Doped it out from circumstances," replied X. Anaxagoras. "You got smuggled Chinese labour so it would scatter and you couldn't be traced; and you split with Hwang Tso instead of hiring him so he'd play the game your way, and so his men would put up a fight, if necessary, and all the rest. Go on."

Fleshpots stared at him in admiration.

"You doped it out!" he said, at last. "Well, I'll hand it to you! You certainly had me fooled to a fare-ye-well —and him! You're not such fools as you looked."

With one accord, Betsy, Marshall, and the Healer of Souls arose and bowed.

"Proceed," urged X. Anaxagoras.

"Well, you see," Fleshpots obeyed, "this woman works for a man who belongs to the same lodge as I do. He knows about her, and one night when we were all yarning together and having a few drinks at the club rooms he tells the yarn."

X. Anaxagoras made a movement of vexation.

"I didn't suppose she'd talk about it to anybody," said he, "and if she did, I didn't suppose Collender was the sort of man to give it away."

"Oh, he didn't mention no names, or say where it was, or anything. He just told it like a yarn he'd read. He made it a good yarn. It hit my fancy. You see I'm a sort of collector of yarns that way." Fleshpots was by now in the full swing, he was enjoying his rôle and quite

happy, savouring his drink for artistic pauses. "A little while after that, a woman I have known—er, quite well" —he gave to the phrase a delicate intonation, shrugging his shoulders slightly in deference to a mixed audience— "went to work in the same office. She got chummy with this Mrs. Maxon. They used to lunch together; by and by they split up a sort of apartment. Mrs. Maxon never said much, but you know how it is with women. My friend got on to little pieces of it, and she told them to me. Pretty soon I said to myself, 'Hullo, that's the one Collender was talking about.' I didn't think much about it, except that it was an interesting yarn. I told it to *him*. Then he doped it out. It was easy to get the notebook through my friend, you see, and that gave us all the dope we needed." A moment of truth and rare illumination came to Fleshpots, together with a sudden desire to justify himself yet further. He leaned forward and the self-satisfaction faded from his face. "I wouldn't have touched it, folks, ordinarily. I make good money. But it looked like a chance to *do* something. I was getting dead sick of the jolly-up life I was leading. I had a hunch to get out somewheres and do some of the red-blooded things a man reads about. God, I was sick of the same old stuff!"

"The spirit of adventure stirred," supplied X. Anaxagoras, not unsympathetically.

"I guess that was it," admitted Fleshpots, a little shamefacedly. A flicker of humour crossed his countenance. "I didn't mind getting away just then for a little while, too," he added. His face sobered again and his

joviality seemed to shrink. "You can't play any game but your own, probably." He finished, almost drearily, "A man is born useless and ornamental, and he's got to stay that way." He uttered rather a cracked echo of his usual laugh.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THERE was no further hitch in the rounding out of this admirable episode. Arbuthnot proved to be most practical. On his voyage and during his necessary stops he had acquired information and worked out plans for development, including labour, in a manner to arouse the admiration of his new employer. He had even thought to charter a suitable gas boat to transport the piratical band of Hwang Tso, and to instruct it where to go and when to be there. He had also used part of the sum X. Anaxagoras had entrusted to him for the purchase of a dozen rifles.

"Probably unnecessary," he said, "but they're good things to have aboard."

"Excellent things to have aboard," agreed Marshall, "but we'll try my scheme first."

Accordingly, when they had dropped anchor in the hidden cove, he, Arbuthnot, and Fleshpots went ashore alone. Hwang Tso could hardly suspect this combination. Eats-'em-alive was considered too unreliable. On the other hand, it would be to the interest of Fleshpots, if he desired his money back, to play fair. They found the Mongolians waiting patiently, smoking their little pipes and playing games of their own. Hwang Tso sat in his usual place

in his usual attitude. To all appearance he had not stirred hand or foot in the interim.

"You b'long long time gone," was his greeting.

"Yes, long time," said Marshall. Fleshpots was licking his lips in an agony of nervousness. This movie stuff did not appeal to him at all. He was very uncertain of his ability to do convincingly any good imitation of Miss Pearl White escaping the sinister, slant-eyed heathen. He remembered her doing that very little thing; only her escape was from an opium den. Besides, he had no trap-doors, or passing limited trains, or racing automobiles, or any other of the proper accessories with which Miss Pearl had been lavishly supplied. And if he had had them, he wasn't lively enough.

"Where boss?" asked Hwang Tso.

"He come pretty soon," replied Arbuthnot.

The short interchange had permitted time for a close approach, which was so arranged that the bodies of Arbuthnot and Marshall interposed between Hwang Tso and the rest of the long room.

"What he mattah with you?" asked Hwang Tso of Fleshpots. A dawning, hardly of suspicion, but of watchfulness crossed his beady black eyes. There was nothing really to suspect, but Hwang Tso possessed the sixth sense of the intelligent professional outlaw.

"Hwang Tso!" Marshall sharply called his attention to himself in a low voice. "Mebbe better so you keep quiet."

The Chinaman's eyes shifted to look into the barrel of an army automatic held hip high and not three feet from

his rotund stomach. For ten seconds he stared without blinking, probably estimating chances should he raise his voice to the fan-tan players at the other end of the room. Then he lifted his eyes to Marshall's face, at which he stared for another ten seconds.

"All light," he said at length. "What you want?"

The moment of real tension was over. Fleshpots mopped his brow. They told Hwang Tso the situation in terse sentences. It is probable that an understanding of most of the details escaped him; but he gathered distinctly that the game was up, resistance would be futile in the long run, and that he and his men might just as well go peaceably. He asked only two questions.

"He go, too?" He indicated Fleshpots. "He no hab got?"

Marshall assured him that such was the case, and added a few terse sentences to the effect that it was better to "go quiet and lose money and keep skin." Hwang Tso listened to the assurance, but he kept his eye on Fleshpots. What he saw probably satisfied him more than what he heard. He reached for his pipe, filled its absurdly tiny bowl, and began to smoke. He said nothing, but seemed to withdraw into some remote and mystical world of his own, leaving his sleek brocaded form seated upright in the chair, its feet close together and parallel, the polished jade bracelets on its yellow arm slipping softly together with a click. Marshall turned and went out, followed by the others.

"There will be no trouble," he told those who had awaited anxiously on the yacht.

"Did you get the arms?" asked Betsy, scanning the small boat.

"I didn't try; I didn't need to. All we wanted was convincing hearing. We got it. Hwang Tso is very far from being a fool. When the gas boat comes for him, he will go like a lamb. You'll see."

They saw. The Chinese and their mat bundles flocked to the beach like a lot of laundrymen. They knew nothing about it: they simply obeyed their brigand of a leader. If he had told them to fight, they would quite cheerfully have attempted to do so. It was nothing to them, one way or the other. And they were quite satisfied. In each man's capacious pocket was more actual cash money than any one of them had ever before possessed. X. Anaxagoras had ascertained that wages had never been paid. What arrangement existed between themselves and Hwang Tso was obscure, but the fact remained that they had at least received nothing from the white men. With Arbuthnot's help, X. Anaxagoras calculated the amount that would be due on a wage basis. He had borrowed the necessary specie from the very considerable sum a yacht like the *Spindrift* had to carry on as long a cruise as this, and had distributed the proper amount to each man personally. Hwang Tso watched the performance with puzzled brow. He could have seen the sense of their bribe earlier in the game, but not now. It was one of the inexplicables, to be accepted with Oriental fatalism. However, his practical sense was still working.

"I no get?" he inquired.

"What for you get?" exploded Marshall; but X. Anaxagoras stopped him with a gesture.

"Your contention is not without justice, in a way," said he, blandly. "I do not doubt that you gave up a modest but steadily lucrative business in small banditry in your own country and went to considerable expense and certainly consumed considerable time on the basis of representations made to you by these men. To be sure, the deportation officials will kindly relieve you of the expenses of the return journey; but there you are! It was through no fault of your own that this little enterprise failed; and therefore it is quite natural that you should expect some return."

This of course meant nothing specific to Hwang Tso, but he caught an encouragement from it.

"I get?" he repeated.

"One thousand dollars," said X. Anaxagoras. "The boss, he pay you."

"All light," agreed Hwang Tso, with such satisfaction as is felt by one who expected nothing and gets something; and turned his eyes toward Eats-'em-alive.

The latter disclaimed any such intention, with quite a spirited suggestion of his old manner.

"Nevertheless," X. Anaxagoras interposed, firmly, "you'll pay him. It is precisely the sum you considered it worth while to offer Rogg here as a bribe. So you are able to do it; and you're going to. After that we're quits, and permit me to say I think you're well out of it on mighty easy terms."

In the end, so it was; and Eats-'em-alive was embarked

on the gas boat with the Chinese, and so departed from their sight for ever. The last they saw of him he was standing on the fantail delivering in the direction of the *Spindrift* an animated oration accompanied by emotional gestures. He, too, had gone aboard like a little lamb —though a lamb of rather a naturally morose disposition —but once safely beyond the strong arms of Rogg and his confrère he had blown up. Unfortunately, the engine of the gas boat was a two-cycle and the staccato popping of its exhaust prevented his words from reaching those to whom they were addressed. The captain and one-man crew of the gas boat, however, to judge by their grinning faces, were having a good time.

Fleshpots begged hard not to be sent along until later. He dreaded the journey with his late partner. But he found that a frost had set in.

"Possibly," Marshall pointed out, "you have forgotten your share in this transaction."

Fleshpots had indeed forgotten that he was in any way to blame. He was quite crushed. On the receding gas boat his short, thick figure could be discerned as far from the orator of the occasion as the craft's dimensions would allow. He had been assured that his reimbursement would follow when determined; less, of course, the wages paid out to the Chinese.

"Of course, you're perfectly right," Betsy remarked, thoughtfully, to the others. "He's just as much a crook as the other man. But I'm sorry for him."

"Which shows the power of social manner," said her brother.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

IT WAS arranged that the *Spindrift* was to take X. Anaxagoras to the nearest port, where he would leave them in quest of the labour and necessaries for continuing the development under Arbuthnot. Then the yacht would resume its cruise. But immediately it appeared that no one wanted to push off without knowing more about the prospects. They recalled that Arbuthnot had ventured the opinion that two days' more work would probably bring the tunnel into the pocket. Finally, Marshall put it up to the crew and was gratified by the hearty response. They'd never done any of that sort of work, but they were willing to try, if Mr. Arbuthnot would show them how. As a matter of fact, they were just as curious and interested as the after cabin. By request, Arbuthnot made his explanations of the situation, as he saw it, on deck where all might hear.

"The point is this," he told them. "We've broken through the solid rock and come out into a mixed rubble of boulders and such stuff. That indicates we are now working in the débris that filled up the country below the ancient waterfall. Also, we have just arrived at a solid hanging wall to our left which shows marks of water erosion. That would seem to have been the face of the old waterfall. Just how high up on that face we are, of

course I cannot say. The thing to do now is to work downward until we strike bedrock. That will be the floor of the basin. See?"

"And that's where the gold should have accumulated," supplemented X. Anaxagoras.

"Exactly: there, and possibly in lower riffles, also. Maxon never had a chance to find that out."

"And then all we have to do," cried Betsy, "is to scoop it up and put it in the bank!"

Arbuthnot smiled.

"I'm afraid it isn't quite as simple as that," said he. "There will have to be an awful lot of excavating and timbering and hauling and washing of gravel and earth for each lot of metal. It will look more like getting out material for a gravel walk than gold mining."

"No gorgeous, glittering nuggets?" cried Betsy, disappointed.

"That is hard to say. It is always possible, and there are sure to be nuggets from time to time; but no one could rely on them, and it is possible to make a very rich haul without actually *seeing* any gold at all—that is, until it is washed out."

With this warning, however, the last work was begun. Marshall had promised that if there *were* any nuggets the discoverers should keep them as souvenirs. With this in prospect the sailors went to work enthusiastically. From time to time one or the other or all three of the principals descended the shaft and watched for a time. It was not particularly inspiring. Some of the men worked with pick and shovel, or occasionally with sledge and drill, on

the hard, densely packed rubble. Others carried out this loosened material and hauled it up to the dump. Still others cut and lowered the necessary timbers. The job lasted longer than the estimated two days, owing, Arbuthnot told them, to the inexperience of the men and to unforseen difficulties of formation. At the end of the fourth day, however, he emerged from the shaft and sculled himself out to the yacht.

"I think we're ready for our pan test," he called up, with a trace of subdued excitement. "If you would come ashore——"

They piled into the boats and came ashore, all of them, to the last man. At the dump they found grouped the men on the working shift. A miner's bucket filled to the brim with fine gravel and earth stood by the winch.

"This is from next the bedrock," said Arbuthnot. "We struck it to-day."

He scooped a flaring-sided miner's pan half full of the gravel and, followed by the rest, with it descended to the stream. Here he allowed water to flow in until the earth was well covered; and then began to give to the mass a rotary motion by means of a skilful and rhythmical twist of the wrists. Some of the water and a good deal of the gravel began to whirl out over the sides. This process he repeated a number of times until the coarser contents of the pan had all been discarded, and there remained only a quantity of tiny pebbles and of jet-black sand. Arbuthnot now worked more delicately. After a moment, he straightened his back and stood up. Those crowding about could

see that the pan now contained merely a half-dozen tablespoonfuls of the black sand.

"Oh!" cried Betsy, in disappointment. "Is that all?"

Arbuthnot gently inclined the pan. The remaining water caused the sand to spread in a long, comet-like fan. The coarser grains rolled fastest and went to the end; the finer grains clung together and stuck along the crack. And then at the top there slowly formed a sharp apex, and imperceptibly, as the water continued to drain, the apex changed colour, showed a tint of yellow, gleamed pure, became gold.

"There you are!" cried Arbuthnot, with satisfaction.

The satisfaction was not at first shared by the others. The yellow was so very minute in its flour-like quality, the amount so very small! It did not seem worth while! Arbuthnot had to explain at length that for a single "pan" taken at random, this was actually a very rich and encouraging prospect. It proved that the pocket existed. And if there was a pocket in which the gold had lodged at all, then it must follow that in crevices and dips and the like the pure metal would probably be found. And even if, as was most unlikely, the ore proved to be no richer than the sample represented by this one "pan," that would be sufficient to pay handsomely. They were encouraged, and perhaps reassured, but they were by no means thrilled.

"Let's try another," suggested Arbuthnot, then. "It's always possible we might blunder on a nugget."

They returned to the dump, preceded by Roggsy. By a sudden movement he had escaped from Rogg and was in

antic mood. He thought he knew where they were going, and instead of stopping at the dump, he disappeared down the shaft.

"Darn that monk!" ejaculated Marshall. "Now I suppose somebody will have to go down after him!"

"Won't he come when he's called?" asked Arbuthnot.

"On shipboard, yes. On land, only the Good Lord knows."

They panned out another charge of the gravel, and then another. Both showed strong "colour." In fact, over the second lot Arbuthnot exclaimed in some excitement.

"You've got a rich thing here!" he cried.

"But I want a nugget!" insisted Betsy.

Arbuthnot gave it as his opinion that the nuggets would be more likely found nearer the bottom of the pocket. That would be days and days away. All this gravel—even that already taken out and on the dump—would have to be carefully washed: it was valuable.

"If you could be here a month from now——"

"But we can't," broke in Marshall. "We must get on—to-morrow or next day, at least."

"I shall send you the very first one found," X. Anaxagoras consoled her. "And each of you boys shall have one, too: that's a promise."

They began to gather their tools in preparation for departure and turned away down the trail.

"We've forgotten Roggsy!" cried Betsy.

They called. They whistled down the shaft. To no avail. Arbuthnot lighted one of the acetylene torches.

"I'll get him in a jiffy," said he, putting foot on the ladder. "No trouble at all."

His head disappeared down the shaft. The bystanders heard an exclamation, then the sound of a quick, light scrambling, then a laugh. Roggsy shot out of the shaft and ran on three legs to a short distance, when he turned chattering. Arbuthnot's head reappeared.

"The little beggar was lying doggo just down the ladder," he laughed, "and he climbed right up over me. By Jove, I was startled!"

Rogg tried to call the monkey to him, but in vain. He made a few cautious steps, but Roggsy hopped out of the way. A more rapid advance merely caused the little animal, still on three legs, to skip nimbly into the brush; whence, however, he instantly reappeared when the pursuit ceased.

"What's he carrying?" wondered Betsy.

"A rock," replied Marshall, disgustedly. "Probably he intends to brain me with it. He's got one of his fool fits on! What in thunder did you let him get away for, Rogg? We've got to catch him now, if it takes all night, or he'll never mind again. Spread out, men—slowly now!"

The sailors, who had played this sometimes aggravating game before, when the ordinarily docile Roggsy had had "one of his fool fits on," quietly and unostentatiously formed a wide encompassing circle and began to move toward the centre. Roggsy skipped nimbly and joyously here and there in high enjoyment; then, at last, when he saw capture inevitable, gave one long leap to Betsy's shoulder, where he snuggled down in a furry, comfortable

ball, his small wise eyes blinking around on each in turn.

"You naughty child!" cried Betsy, reaching up for him.

"Take that stone away from him," advised Marshall. "I'll bet he hasn't quit his idea of beaning me with it, yet."

Betsy held out her palm, on which Roggsy obediently deposited his missile. She was about to throw it from her, when her eyes widened.

"Look here!" she breathed.

She held out what looked to be an ordinary earth-encrusted bit of rock about half the size of her fist. On it were four marks or gouges where evidently the monkey had placed experimental teeth. They gleamed dully yellow!

Arbuthnot snatched his sheath knife from its case and scratched the surface of the stone.

"Here's your nugget, Mrs. Marshall!" he chortled, "and, by Jove, it's a good one! Good old Roggsy!"

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE night before the *Spindrift* sailed, leaving all in order under Arbuthnot, Marshall was visited by a singularly vivid and arresting dream. He thought that before him stretched indefinitely into the landscape horizon, as far as he could see, a long, elaborately set banquet table, oppressive with food. On it were literally tons of food, prepared in the most variegated fashions, all the garnered fruits of the earth, and flesh and fowl of every known or guessed sort. He was the only guest, and he sat at the head. As he looked down the endless vista of food, somehow the long ribbon of the table seemed to be swaying in a kind of rhythm, back and forth, like a gentle breeze through tall grass; back and forth, back and forth, in ripples. And little by little this rhythm became vaguely familiar; finally, after the mysterious fashion of dreams, it took to itself words. "Ornamental and useless! Ornamental and useless! Ornamental and useless!" the dream rocked back and forth. Somehow it became terrible. He wrenched himself awake and found himself repeating the phrase.

All the following day, in the preoccupation of departure, the rhythm swung through his thoughts. The words, he remembered, had been used by little Fleshpots to describe himself; and he had added, Marshall remembered, that he

was born that way and it was useless to try to escape his fate. Marshall rebelled at this. "The man's not right," he muttered to himself. "He could get out of it——" He did not complete the sentence.

He was at the wheel. A cool breeze was blowing from the northwest, and the day was sparkling and laughing, with radiant waters and blue and airy mountains brushed with the bloom of purple grapes. Marshall smiled to himself as he wondered what the psychoanalysts would make of it—they were strong on dreams. He grinned as the thought crossed his mind that it could probably be ascribed to the fact that the yacht was out of grapefruit. He definitely dismissed the subject. Slowly there came to him that happy vacuity of mind, the momentarily lulled alertness of the helmsman in clear waters and with a fair wind. His eyes were wide and unfocussed; his senses alive only to the sun and wind. Of his conscious mind merely enough remained on guard to hold the ship true. And gradually the dream rhythm possessed him again: ornamental and useless—ornamental and useless—over and over again. For a second he actually seemed to himself to be standing at the head of that terrible table—— With a jump into focus, his mind realized that it was not a table: it was the long, narrow yacht's deck. Then he slid out of focus again, and it became an endless yacht stretching on and on and on——

"Here, wake up! You'll be asleep on watch!" he told himself, roughly, giving to the wheel an unnecessarily vigorous turn that caused the foresail leach to shiver and the sailors on watch to look up in inquiry. In a little panic his

mind stampeded from the instant of disquieting illumination. But the silent inner alchemy had done its work. We sail our surface seas of life, but only rarely are we privileged to glimpse the deeps where continents are forming for future nobler races. And then we rarely look.

CHAPTER XL

THE dusk had fallen on the waters, and the brisk day wind had fallen with it to a soft night breeze off the distant shore. Under its gentle propulsion the yacht moved steadily forward, cleaving the tremulous stars that jewelled the ocean, creating a swarming multitude of new stars in the phosphorescence that curved from her prow and gleamed in her wake. Marshall was taking his second trick at the wheel. Betsy and her brother had gone forward to watch the cutwater throw its arcs of bluish sparkling light to right and to left.

"Well," said X. Anaxagoras at length, "the adventure came, you see. Adventure always comes to one who goes forth with the spirit of adventure within him. And adventure is always a release. It makes fluid what has solidified into rigidity. It permits infiltration. New forces find their point of application, forces of poise, of alignment."

Betsy lifted her eyebrows at him humorously.

"Sid dear," said she, "your conversation is as cryptic as an oracle. Are you going to adapt it to my childlike intellect?"

"I think you know," he said, quietly.

A pause ensued, a pause of that strange alchemy which results in the fusing of two minds into a capacity for insight greater than either alone possesses. In spite of their dis-

similarity these two were in essence sympathetically very close.

"Jerry," she encouraged him, at length.

X. Anaxagoras seated himself on the deck, his back to the gunwale, and produced his pipe.

"A man's body," he began, with relish, "maintains itself in an upright position by quickly adjusting any losses of equilibrium. He has a very delicate and beautiful mechanism for the purpose. A man's inner eternal self is constantly striving to keep its balance, too; but it is striving under a handicap. He does not spontaneously utilize his inner balancing power—or even recognize it; and he has a very small understanding of the forces that are always trying to push him off balance."

He paused.

"Which means?" queried Betsy, as he apparently showed no indications of going on. "Which means?" she repeated.

"It means that one of the wings of Jerry's inner and eternal spirit was getting to be folded tight to his side, and was in danger of getting cramped in that position. Now it had spread itself again. The wings of his spirit are balancing him very easily and prettily. Watch out! He's ready for flight."

Betsy said nothing.

"Don't you see it?" X. Anaxagoras urged. "Don't you feel it? Why, he's taken hold."

"Of what?" demanded Betsy. "Yes, I do feel he's different somehow. But——"

"Wait and see," advised her brother, "but professionally I am quite ready to discharge my patient." He chuckled

slightly. "If I didn't," he added, "he'd probably discharge me. He's beginning to look upon his physician with amused tolerance."

"Oh, *no!*" cried Betsy.

"Oh, *yes!*" mimicked her brother, "and an excellent thing, too. I don't mean he has not a deep affection for me, but he's become vigorously autonomous. The psychic umbilical cords that united us have become devitalized. It is the best thing in the world. In other words," ended X. Anaxagoras, practically, "he looks on me as a lovable fellow of whom he's very fond, but he has arrived at an amused tolerance of my preposterous idiocy, my absurd treatments, and my entirely supposititious psychic manipulations; and he faintly wonders why they ever impressed him as they did. In other words, I've made a cure—but he thinks he's done it himself."

"It doesn't seem fair to you," said Betsy, doubtfully, but without attempt at denial.

"Why, little sister, he'd go to the ends of the earth for me; and that's all that is important; it's all that is ever important."

Betsy mused thoughtfully for a moment, then roused herself with a shake.

"To what do you ascribe your cure, dear doctor?" she asked, in a lighter tone; "to the spotty cow or the captured grizzlies?"

"Ways and means are unimportant"—X. Anaxagoras shrugged—"except as all real experience is spiritual food, and all ready-made experience is so much bran. It matters very little how we feed, so that we digest."

Betsy considered this.

"I admit," said she, "that when we first met Jerry you gave him back his appetite for life. But as to his digestion, as you so poetically put it, I still have to be shown."

"Wait and see," advised her brother, confidently.

CHAPTER XLI

THEY remained together some time after this, but neither spoke. They sat with the open eyes in which no retinal impressions are made. X. Anaxagoras finished his pipe. Betsy sat with clasped hands. They were perfectly though silently in accord. Through them eddied deep inner happy driftings of mind, as smoke luxuriously giving itself to wandering currents of air.

"Well," observed Betsy at last, "it's lovely, but I think I'll turn in. Good-night, brother dear, you're a comfort and a blessing." She arose, then turned to him impulsively. "How do you always manage to make people feel so *secure* in themselves and so excited toward life?" she marvelled.

She went aft, stood for a moment by Marshall, happily steering his little ship, then descended to her cabin where she slowly prepared for bed. But after she had glided between the sheets she did not at once snap off the electric light. For a long time she lay staring up at it quietly, her hands clasped behind her head. She seemed to herself to be waiting for something, though what it was she could not have told, nor why she waited. It was as though a command had been laid upon her; as though she obeyed a command. The ship's bell forward struck faintly three pairs and a single note; it was time she was asleep; she had had a long day. "Wait and see," her brother had told her; and

here she was, obeying orders, somewhat too literally. She was waiting; but what was there to see? Power of suggestion, she supposed; a chance word lodged in her subconscious and carried out beyond all rhyme or reason by that faithful creature. Yet that sense of passive obedience persisted. And her mind wandered off idly into the path of an old speculation. What was Sid's real power? Was there indeed a command, imposed in ways she did not understand? She had seen Sid do wonderful things with the souls of men, mysterious things—and yet they were not mysterious when the searchlight of common sense was turned on them—or were they?

She became conscious by its cessation that for some time a murmur of voices had been coming from the main cabin. The door opened and closed softly. Marshall came in.

"Hullo!" he said, in surprise. "Not asleep yet?" He began to chuckle. "What do you think?" said he. "When I came off watch and came down in the cabin, there was that precious brother of yours dressed up in his hospital clothes and with his infernal pad and pencil, sitting behind the table! He hasn't done that stunt since the year One. I began to think he'd outgrown it."

Betsy sat up in bed.

"Tell me all about it!" she cried.

Marshall looked at her, a little surprised at her vehemence.

"Oh, I had to play his game, of course. When he gets that way you can't get out of it. Why, in Vancouver, there, when I hadn't seen him for two years, I couldn't get a human word out of him until he'd finished his stunt."

"Yes, but what, exactly?" Betsy insisted.

Marshall sat down and began leisurely to unlace his shoes.

"Oh, I don't know. He made one of his comic-opera probes, and finally informed me that my vital processes were now normal and my vibrations greatly heightened, or some such rot. Told me gravely I was 'cured'—I don't know of what—and informed me I could now get along without further treatments. What treatments, I'd like to know! He certainly is a weird specimen when he gets that way!" He chuckled again and began on the other shoe. "Of course, he's a good psychologist, I don't doubt, and an exceptionally able man," he added, conscientiously, "but that's out of my line. All I care about is that he's the Real Thing—and then some. But I could brain him with an ax when he gets on one of those eerie rampages of his. You can't talk sense to him. I had a sort of a plan I wanted to talk over with him, but, doggone it all, I'll be darned if I'm going to have him act as though he'd hypnotized me into it; as if he'd had it first and hung it on me. Well," concluded Marshall, comfortably, sitting up straight, a shoe in each hand, "I'll let him sleep it off and talk to him to-morrow. He's got a good head on him when he isn't acting foolish. I won't——"

"What plan?" Betsy interrupted him.

"Oh, I don't know exactly; it isn't quite a plan," returned Marshall, nonchalantly, with a sort of boyish indifference. "To tell the truth, I think I'm getting restless. You see, I'm getting in such fighting trim, what with this life and all, that I'm feeling my oats. I feel like striking out and tearing things up a little." He laughed, deprecatingly, and laid the shoes down carefully, side by side. "I say"—he glanced

at her—"I wonder if you'd mind it very much if we cut this trip short and stowed the old boat for a while, and took a look somewhere on land?"

"I'd love it! I'd *love* it!" cried Betsy. Her eyes were shining. Marshall stared at her a moment, surprised at her vehemence. She lay back and closed her eyes. After a moment she opened them again. "What do you want to do?" she asked.

"Well," said Marshall, "I don't quite know yet; we'll see. Maybe I'll get Arbuthnot—after he's through here, of course—to help me open up Dad's old Delta holdings for farms—get in roads and irrigation and make it productive instead of useless—I don't know. But I thought, anyway, that we might quit the yacht at Vancouver and go east by the Canadian Pacific. Benton can take her on around through the Canal. Then we can lay her up for a while. Of course, we'd see that the men had good places first. Or perhaps we'd be doing something or other where we could use some of them."

"I'd like to keep Rogg," put in Betsy. "But the Delta thing wouldn't take long."

"Oh, I don't quite know yet. We'll have to see. *Something* a man can bite on. But you're for it?"

"Yes, I'm for it," replied Betsy. She was too wise to press yet for details, to attempt to crystallize first stirrings.

CHAPTER XLII

FOR some time thereafter Betsy lay awake, though by all rights she should now have been ready for slumber. Marshall fell asleep promptly enough; she could hear his steady breathing in the bed the other side the little cabin. Her active brain was fully aroused to expectation of the future, and to a vague and undefined dread of it which she could not understand. She was not one of the worrying sort. Ordinarily, she could put things out of her mind until the proper time came for them. Again and again she composed herself for sleep, she slipped partly away, and again and again she found herself brought back to her starting point, as though by the pressure of something unknown to which she responded. Before, she had mysteriously felt that she must wait. Now what?

"I'm getting nervous," she told herself; though she did not in reality feel the least bit nervous, With an idea of composing herself by the serenity of the night, she arose, slipped on a dresssing gown, and softly let herself out of the cabin. Only then did she realize that in the main cabin beyond the short passageway that led to her stateroom the lights were still burning. She stepped forward more quickly to remedy this carelessness as to the status of storage batteries, and came upon X. Anaxagoras, still in his hospital

clothes, still seated quietly behind the table whereon were his pads and pencils.

"Here you are at last," he greeted her.

She stared at him, and one hand stole slowly to her breast.

"Have you been waiting for me, Sid?" Her eyes were wide with wonder. "Tell me."

"What?"

"I have been lying there wide awake for so long—and I felt urged by something—as if I were being commanded. Have you been waiting for me to obey?"

"I have been waiting: I knew you would come." He smiled upward into her wide eyes. "Jerry was sure to tell you his new resolution, and you were sure to be excited and disturbed. What more natural than that you should come out for a breath of the night before you slept? Isn't that explanation enough of my waiting for you?"

"I don't know," she murmured. "That's just it; I don't know—and I have never really known."

She sank into a chair opposite the table. For a time neither spoke.

"You were right," she said at last. "It has happened. He has unfolded his wings." She clasped her hands, almost wrung them, spoke with a suddenly released intensity. "I am frightened: I don't know why!"

"Tell me," urged her brother.

"It's the future. This is so precious a thing, and so easily marred, so easily destroyed. It must be so carefully nurtured at first. Jerry is aroused—but what will he do? There must be an outlet, something that he can put his whole heart into. What is there for him?"

"I do not know," replied the Healer of Souls.

"You *must* know; you must think! It is vital. It has come to me like a flash how vital it is, and how precious. What will he *do?* I know—he has a vague idea; but what will he do of *lasting* interest? Think! Think!"

"I shouldn't worry," smiled X. Anaxagoras.

"He cannot be interested in business," she persisted. "He has almost too much money now, and the game never did appeal to him. He has no artistic or literary or musical talent. He is a man of action rather than a student. Politics—I doubt if he could put his heart in them. He must put his heart into what he does, or it's practically useless."

"It's a curious thing," observed X. Anaxagoras, smiling, "that he used almost exactly those same words to me some months ago—in Vancouver."

"Well?"

X. Anaxagoras drew his pad of paper toward himself and on it made a single black dot. He contemplated this.

"Shut your eyes for a moment and see us as we are," said he, "—the tiny, valiant *Spindrift* in a great world of night water and of stars. She moves, and she moves purposefully in the mighty night, a mechanism endowed by man with a personality that is an extension of his own, an embodiment of his eternal restless efforts to occupy more space. What a contrast between us tiny atoms on board and the mighty accomplishment in the control of our destinies! I never cease to marvel at a ship. It is the foothold for a man's aspirations," he placed the point of his pencil on the dot he had made. "Like this," said he.

"You must cease to give thought and go forward con-

fidently," he went on, after a moment's pause. "You cannot decide for Jerry; I cannot. His are the wings unfolded; his the flight. But we can wait in confidence. Have we not proved that adventure comes to him who seeks with adventure in his soul?" He leaned forward, and it seemed to Betsy that his figure expanded with an august dignity. "All things needful to the soul exist, waiting only to be called. And the call rings true only from true aspiration. Once the sap is flowing, it brings its own manipulation of growth. The greatest of all adventures, but which comes as readily as any other to the call, is the grand adventure of life, the creation of one's self."

He leaned back comfortably.

"Jerry goes to seek with adventure in his soul," he concluded, confidently, "and if I believe anything whatever, it is that the Great Adventure will surely come. What it will be I know no more than I knew what lesser adventure awaited us here in the North. But it is there and he will surely meet it, because now he really seeks." Again he leaned forward to look into her eyes. "A genuine call from a fully awakened consciousness is always answered!" he said, impressively.

She stared beyond him. A comfort, as of a warmth, seemed slowly to pervade her whole being; a confidence encompassed her on which her spirit sank back in delicious repose.

X. Anaxagoras arose and kissed her on the forehead.

"It is late, little sister," said he. "Now you can have a good sleep."

THE END

There's More to Follow!

More stories of the sort you like; more, probably, by the author of this one; more than 500 titles all told by writers of world-wide reputation, in the Authors' Alphabetical List which you will find on the *reverse side* of the wrapper of this book. Look it over before you lay it aside. There are books here you are sure to want—some, possibly, that you have *always* wanted.

It is a *selected* list; every book in it has achieved a certain measure of *success*.

The Grosset & Dunlap list is not only the greatest Index of Good Fiction available, it represents in addition a generally accepted Standard of Value. It will pay you to

Look on the Other Side of the Wrapper!

In case the wrapper is lost write to the publishers for a complete catalog

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD'S

STORIES OF ADVENTURE

May be had wherever books are sold. Ask for Grosset & Dunlap's list

A GENTLEMAN OF COURAGE

THE ALASKAN

THE COUNTRY BEYOND

THE FLAMING FOREST

THE VALLEY OF SILENT MEN

THE RIVER'S END

THE GOLDEN SNARE

NOMADS OF THE NORTH

KAZAN

BAREE, SON OF KAZAN

THE COURAGE OF CAPTAIN PLUM

THE DANGER TRAIL

THE HUNTED WOMAN

THE FLOWER OF THE NORTH

THE GRIZZLY KING

ISOBEL

THE WOLF HUNTERS

THE GOLD HUNTERS

THE COURAGE OF MARGE O'DOONE

BACK TO GOD'S COUNTRY

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers,* NEW YORK